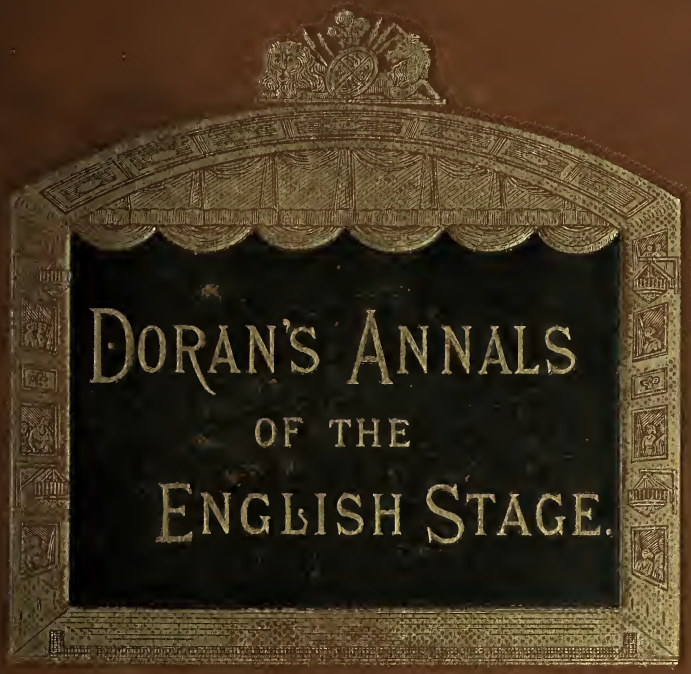
"Their Majesties' Servants"



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"Their Majesties' Servants"

DR. DORAN, F.S.A.

VOLUME THE SECOND

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"THEIR MAJESTIES' SERVANTS"

ANNALS

OF

THE ENGLISH STAGE

FROM

THOMAS BETTERTON TO EDMUND KEAN

BY

DR. DORAN, F.S.A.

EDITED AND REVISED BY ROBERT W. LOWE

With Fifty Copperplate Portraits and Eighty Wood Engravings

IN THREE VOLUMES

VOLUME THE SECOND

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MRS. OLDFIELD.

CHAPTER I.

MRS. OLDFIELD.

Artists who have been wont to look into the *Vicar of Wakefield*, *Gil Blas*, and last century comedies, for picturesque subjects, would find account in referring to the lives of our actresses. Here is not a bad picture of its class. The time is at the close of the seventeenth century; the scene is at the Mitre Tavern in St. James's Market, kept by one Mrs. Voss. It is a quiet summer evening, and after the fatigues of the day are over, and before the later business of the night has commenced, that buxom lady is reclining in an easy chair, listening to a fair

and bright young creature, her sister,[1] who is reading aloud, and is enjoying what she reads. Her eyes, like Kathleen's in the song, are beaming with light, her face glowing with intelligence and feeling. Even an elderly lady, their mother, turns away from the picture of her husband, who had ridden in the Guards, and held a commission under James II.—she turns from this, and memories of old days, to gaze with tender admiration on her brilliant young daughter; who, be it said, at this present reading, is only an apprentice to a seamstress in King Street, Westminster.

But the soul of Thalia is under her bodice, into a neater than which, Anadyomene could not have laced herself. She is rapt in the reading, and with book held out, and face upraised, and figure displayed at its very best, she enthrals her audience, unconscious herself that this is more numerous than she might have supposed. On the threshold of the open door stand a couple of guests; one of them has, to us, no name; the other is a gay, rollicking young fellow, smartly dressed, a semi-military look about him, good humour rippling over his face, combined with an air of astonishment and delight. This is Captain Farquhar. His sight and hearing are wholly concentrated on that enchanted and enchanting girl, who, unmindful of aught but the "Scornful Lady," continues still reading aloud that rattling comedy of Beaumont and Fletcher. How the mother listened to it all is not to be told; but nearly a century later Queen Charlotte could listen to

[1] Her niece.

her daughters reading "Polly Honeycombe," and no harm done. We may fancy the young reader at the Mitre, whose name is Anne Oldfield, in that silvery voice for which she was famed, half in sadness and half in mirth, reading the lines in which the lady says :—

> "All we that are call'd woman, know as well
> As men, it were a far more noble thing
> To grace where we are graced, and give respect
> There where we are respected : yet we practise
> A wilder course, and never bend our eyes
> On men with pleasure, till they find the way
> To give us a neglect. Then we too late
> Perceive the loss of what we might have had,
> And dote to death."

Captain Farquhar, at whatever passage in the play, betrayed his presence by his involuntary applause. The girl looked towards him more pleased than abashed; and when the captain pronounced that there was in her the stuff for an exquisite actress, the fluttered thing clasped her hands, glowed at the prophecy, and protested in her turn, that of all conditions it was the one she wished most ardently to fulfil. From that moment the glory and the mischief were commenced. The tall girl stood up, her large eyes dilating, the assured future Lady Betty Modish and Biddy Tipkin, Farquhar's own Sylvia and Mrs. Sullen, the Violante and the Lady Townley that were to set the playgoing world mad with delight; the Andromache, Marcia, and Jane Shore, that were to wring tears from them; the supreme lady in all, but chiefest in comedy; and that "genteel," for which she seemed expressly born.

Farquhar talked of her to Vanbrugh, and Vanbrugh introduced her to Rich, and Rich took her into his company, assigned her a beginner's salary, fifteen shillings a week, and gave her nothing to do. She had a better life of it at the seamstress's in King Street. But she had time to spare and leisure to wait. She was barely fifteen, when, in 1700, she played Alinda, in Vanbrugh's adaptation from Beaumont and Fletcher, the "Pilgrim." The next three or four years were those of probation; and when, in the season of 1704-5, Cibber assigned to her the part of Lady Betty Modish, in his "Careless Husband," the town at once recognised in her the most finished actress of such difficult yet effective parts of her day.

The gentle Alinda suited the years and inexperience of Mrs. Oldfield; her youth was in her favour, and her figure, but therewith was such great diffidence, that she had not courage enough to modulate her voice. Cibber watched her; he could see nothing to recommend her, save her graceful person. But there reached his ear occasional silver tones, which seemed to assure him of the rare excellence of the instrument. Still, like "the great Mrs. Barry," her first appearances were failures; and such were those of Sarah Siddons, in after years. Warmed by encouraging applause, however, the promise ripened, and with opportunity, the perfection that came was demonstrated both to watchful Cibber and an expectant public.

In 1703 the company was at Bath, where Queen

Anne might have been seen in the Pump Room in the morning,—later in the day, at the play. But the joyous and brilliant queen of comedy was *not* there. Mrs. Verbruggen, the Mrs. Mountfort of earlier days, was ill in town, nursing a baby, whose birth ultimately cost the life of the mother. There was a scramble for her parts. Each of the more influential actresses obtained several; but to young and unobtrusive Mrs. Oldfield, there fell but one,—the mediocre part of Leonora, in "Sir Courtly Nice." Cibber reluctantly ran over the scenes with her, at her request, in which the Knight and the Lady meet. He was careless, from lack of appreciation of the actress; *she* was piqued, and sullenly repeated the words set down for her. There was, in short, a mutual distaste. *But*, when the night came, Colley saw the almost perfect actress before him, and as he says,—"she had a just occasion to triumph over the error of my judgment by the almost amazement that her unexpected performance awaked me to; so sudden and forward a step into nature I had never seen. And what made her performance more valuable was, that I knew it all proceeded from her own understanding,—untaught and unassisted by any one more experienced actor." Any other player but Cibber, in his place, would have laid Anne Oldfield's success to the instruction he had given her at rehearsal.

Colley Cibber had then in his desk the unfinished manuscript of his "Careless Husband;" it had long lain there, through the author's hopelessness of ever finding an actress who would realise his idea of Lady

Betty Modish. He had no longer any doubt. He at once finished the piece, brought it on the stage, and silent as to his own share in the triumph, attributed it all, or nearly all, to Mrs. Oldfield. "Not only to the uncommon excellence of her action; but even to her personal manner of conversing." I must repeat what Cibber tells us, that many of the sentiments were Mrs. Oldfield's, dressed up by him, "with a little more care than when they negligently fell from her lively humour." Respecting what Cibber adds, that "had her birth placed her in a higher rank of life, she had certainly appeared to be, in reality, what in the play she only excellently acted,—an agreeably gay woman of quality, a little too conscious of her natural attractions," I will remark that, as she really appeared to be so, her birth (she was a gentleman's daughter) could not prevent her from appearing so. And Cibber avows, what the testimony of Walpole confirms, that he had "often seen her in private societies, where women of the best rank might have borrowed some part of her behaviour without the least diminution of their sense of dignity."

In 1702, the merit of Mrs. Oldfield was not recognised by Gildon, who, in his "Comparison between the two Stages," classes her among "the rubbish," of which the stage should be swept. Of Mrs. Verbruggen (Mountfort), he speaks as "a miracle." He could not see that Oldfield would be her successor, and would, in some parts, even excel her. By the year 1706, however, she had risen to be on an equality with such a brilliant favourite as Mrs.

Bracegirdle, whom, in the opinion of many, her younger competitor surpassed. The salary of the latter then, and for some years later, was not, however, a large one, if measured by modern rule. Four pounds a week, with a benefit,—in all, little more than £250 a year, cannot be called excessive guerdon. Her own benefit was always profitable; but I am sorry to add, that this joyous-looking creature, apparently brimful of good nature, was very reluctant to play for the benefit of her colleagues. Subsequently, her revenue from the stage-salary and benefit averaged about £500 a year.

A remark of hers to Cibber, shows how she entered into the spirit of her parts. Cibber had replaced Dicky Norris, who was ill, in the part of Barnaby Brittle, in the "Amorous Widow," in which Mrs. Oldfield played Barnaby's wife. The couple are a sort of George Dandin and his spouse. When the play was over, Cibber asked her, in his familiar way, "Nancy, how did you like your new husband?" "Very well," said she; "but not half so well as Dicky Norris." "How so?" asked Cibber. "You are too important a figure," she answered; "but Dicky is so diminutive, and looks so sneaking, that he seems born to be deceived; and when he plays with me, I make him what a husband most dislikes to be, with hearty good will."

Genest cites Cibber, Chetwood, and Davies, in order to describe her adequately. "After her success in Lady Betty Modish," he says, "all that nature had given her of the actress seemed to have risen to

its full perfection; but the variety of her powers could not be known till she was seen in variety of characters which, as fast as they fell to her, she equally excelled in. In the wearing of her person she was particularly fortunate; her figure was always improving, to her thirty-sixth year; but her excellence in acting was never at a stand. And Lady Townley, one of her last new parts, was a proof that she was still able to do more, if more could have been done for her."

Davies, after noticing her figure and expression, says of her "large speaking eyes," that in some particular comic situations she kept them half shut, "especially when she intended to give effect to some brilliant or gay thought. In sprightliness of air and elegance of manner, she excelled all actresses, and was greatly superior in the clear, sonorous, and harmonious tones of her voice."

How are Wilks and the inimitable She photographed for posterity? "Wilks's Copper Captain was esteemed one of his best characters. Mrs. Oldfield was equally happy in Estifania. When she drew the pistol from her pocket, pretending to shoot Perez, Wilks drew back, as if greatly terrified, and in a tremulous voice, uttered, 'What, thine own husband!' To which she replied, with archness of countenance and a half-shut eye, 'Let mine own husband then be in 's own wits,' in a tone of voice in imitation of his, that the theatre was in a tumult of applause."

From Cibber, again, we learn that she was modest

and unpresuming; that in all the parts she undertook, she sought enlightenment and instruction from every quarter, "but it was a hard matter to give her a hint that she was not able to improve." With managers she was not exacting; "she lost nothing by her easy conduct; she had everything she asked, which she took care should be always reasonable, because she hated as much to be grudged as to be denied a civility."

Like Mrs. Barry, she entered fully into the character she had to represent, and examined it closely, in order to grasp it effectually. When the "Beaux' Stratagem" was in rehearsal (1707), in which she played Mrs. Sullen, she remarked to Wilks, that she thought the author had dealt too freely with Mrs. Sullen, in giving her to Archer, without such a proper divorce as would be a security to her honour. Wilks communicated this to the author. "Tell her," said poor Farquhar, who was then dying, "that for her peace of mind's sake, I'll get a real divorce, marry her myself, and give her my bond she shall be a real widow in less than a fortnight."

Mrs. Oldfield was the original representative of sixty-five characters. The greater number of these belong to genteel comedy, as it is called, a career which she commenced as peculiarly her own, in 1703, when chance assigned to her the part of Leonora, in "Sir Courtly Nice." Her wonderful success in this, induced Cibber to trust to her the part of Lady Betty Modish, in the "Careless Husband," the comedy which he had put aside in despair of finding a lady

equal to his conception of the character. Her mere conversation in that play intoxicated the house. At a later period, her audiences were even more ecstatic at her Lady Townley,—an ecstasy in which the managers must have shared, for they immediately added fifty guineas to her salary. It was just the sum which the benevolent actress gave annually to that most contemptibly helpless personage, Savage. Her highest salary never, I believe, exceeded three hundred guineas; but this was exclusive of benefits, occasions on which gold was showered into her lap.

Humour, grace, vivacity,—all were exuberant on the stage, when she and Wilks were playing against each other. Indeed, one can hardly realise the idea of this supreme queen of comedy wearing the robe and illustrating the sorrows of tragedy. She, for her own part, disliked the latter vocation. She hated, as she said often, to have a page dragging her tail about. "Why do not they give these parts to Porter? She can put on a better tragedy-face than I can." Earnest as she was, however, in these characters before the audience, she was frolicsome at rehearsal. When "Cato" was in preparation, Mrs. Oldfield was cast for Marcia, the philosophical statesman's daughter. Addison attended the rehearsals, and Swift was at Addison's side, making suggestions, and marking the characteristics of the lively people about him. He never had a good word for woman, and consequently he had his usual coarse epithet for Mrs. Oldfield, speaking of her as "the drab that played Cato's daughter;" and railing at her for her hilarity while

rehearsing that passionate part, and, in her forgetfulness, calling merrily out to the prompter, "What next? what next?"

Yet this hilarious actress played Cleopatra with dignity, and Calista with feeling. She accepted with great reluctance the part of Semandra, in "Mithridates," when that tragedy was revived in 1708; but Chetwood says she performed the part to perfection, and became reconciled to tragedy by reason of her success. In these characters, however, she could be excelled by others, but in Lady Betty Modish and Lady Townley she was probably never equalled. In the comedy of lower life she was, perhaps, less original; at least, Anthony Aston remarks, that in free comedy she borrowed something from Mrs. Verbruggen's manner. When Wilks, as Lord Townley, exclaimed "Prodigious!" in the famous scene with his lady, played by Mrs. Oldfield, the house applied it to her acting, and broke into repeated rounds of applause.

"Who should act genteel comedy, perfectly," asks Walpole, "but people of fashion that have sense? Actors and actresses can only guess at the tone of high life, and cannot be inspired with it. Why are there so few genteel comedies, but because most comedies are written by men not of that sphere. Etherege, Congreve, Vanbrugh, and Cibber wrote genteel comedy, because they lived in the best company; and Mrs. Oldfield played it so well, because she not only followed, but often set the fashion. General Burgoyne has writ the best modern comedy

for the same reason; and Miss Farren is as excellent as Mrs. Oldfield, because she has lived with the best style of men in England. Farquhar's plays talk the language of a marching regiment in country quarters. Wycherley, Dryden, Mrs. Centlivre, &c., wrote as if they had only lived in the *Rose Tavern;* but then the Court lived in Drury Lane, too, and Lady Dorchester and Nell Gwyn were equally good company."

In this there is some injustice against Mrs. Centlivre, for whose name should be supplied that of Aphra Behn. Walpole judges more correctly of the comic writers of the seventeenth century, when he places Molière "Senor Moleiro," as Downes absurdly calls him, at the head of them all. "Who upon earth," he says, "has written such perfect comedies? for the 'Careless Husband' is but one; the 'Nonjuror' was built on the 'Tartuffe,' and if the Man of Mode (Etherege) and Vanbrugh are excellent, they are too indelicate; and Congreve, who beat all for wit, is not always natural, still less, simple."

It has been said of Mrs. Oldfield, that she never troubled the peace of any lady at the head of a household; but I think she may have marred the expectations of some who desired to reach that eminence. She early captivated the heart of Mr. Maynwaring. He was a bachelor, rich, connected with the government, and a hard drinker, according to the prevailing fashion. He was Cymon subdued by Iphigenia. He loved the lady's refinement, and she kept his household as carefully as if she had been

his wife, and presided at his table with a grace that charmed him. There was something of Beauty and the Beast in this connection, but the end of the fable was wanting; the animal was never converted to an Azor, and a marriage with Zemira was the one thing wanting.

When Maynwaring died, society almost looked upon her as an honest widow. Indeed, it had never rejected her. The standard of morals was low, and when the *quasi* widow accepted the proposal of General Churchill to place her at the head of his establishment, as she had been in that of Mr. Maynwaring, no one blamed her. Marriage, indeed, seems to have been thought of, and Queen Caroline, who did not at all disdain to stoop to little matters of gossip, one day remarked to Mrs. Oldfield, who had, I suppose, been reading to a court circle, "I hear, Mrs. Oldfield, that you and the General are married?" "Madam," said the actress, playing her very best, "the General keeps his own secrets!"

The two love passages in the life of Anne Oldfield were, in short, founded on sentiment and not on interest. The Duke of Bedford offered her more brilliant advantages than the General or the Squire; but the disinterested actress spurned them, and kept sisterhood with duchesses. She was to be seen on the terrace at Windsor, walking with the consorts of dukes, and with countesses, and wives of English barons, and the whole gay group might be heard calling one another by their Christian names. In later days, Kitty Clive called such fine folk "dam-

aged quality;" and later still, the second Mrs. Barry did not value such companionship at a "pin's fee;" but Anne Oldfield drew from it many an illustration, which she transported to the stage.

During her last season, her sufferings were often so acute that when the applause was loudest, the poor actress turned aside to hide the tears forced from her by pain. She never gave up till the agony was too great to be endured, and then she refused to receive a salary which, according to her articles, was not to be discontinued in illness. She lingered a few months in her house in Lower Grosvenor Street; the details of her last moments, as given by Pope, mingle a little truth with much error and exaggeration :—

> "'Odious! in woollen? 'twould a saint provoke!'
> Were the last words that poor Narcissa spoke.
> 'No, let a charming chintz and Brussels lace
> Wrap my cold limbs and shade my lifeless face;
> One would not sure be frightful when one's dead.
> And, Betty, give this cheek a little red!'"

Betty was the ex-actress, Mrs. Saunders, who resided with Narcissa. She had quitted the stage in 1720, and, says Mr. Urban, "attended Mrs. Oldfield constantly, and did the office of priest to the last." Poor Narcissa, after death, was attired in a Holland night-dress, with tucker and double ruffles of Brussels lace, of which latter material she also wore a head-dress, and a pair of "new kid gloves." This, another writer calls being "buried in *full dress*." The report seems to have been founded on Mrs.

Oldfield's natural good taste in costume. Flavia, such is her name in the *Tatler*, "is ever well drest, and always the genteelest woman you meet; her clothes are so exactly fitted that they appear part of her person."

It was in the above described dress that the deceased actress received such honour as actress never received before, nor has ever received since. The lady lay in state in the Jerusalem Chamber, a distinction not unfrequently, indeed, conceded to persons of high rank and small merit, but which, nevertheless, seemed out of place in the case of Anne Oldfield; but had she been really a queen, the public could not have thronged more eagerly to the spectacle.

The solemn lying in state of an English actress in the Jerusalem Chamber, the sorrow of the public over their lost favourite, and the regret of friends in noble, or humble, but virtuous homes, where Mrs. Oldfield had been ever welcome, contrast strongly with the French sentiment towards French players. It has been already said, that as long as Clairon exercised the power, when she advanced to the footlights, to make the (then standing) pit recoil several feet, by the mere magic of her eyes, the pit, who enjoyed the terror as a luxury, flung crowns to her, and wept at the thought of losing her; but Clairon infirm was Clairon forgotten, and to a decaying actor or actress a French audience is the most merciless in the world. The brightest and best of them, as with us, died in the service of the public. Monfleury, Mondory, and Bricourt, died of apoplexy, brought on by excess of

zeal. Molière, who fell in harness, was buried with less ceremony than some favourite dog. The charming Lecouvreur, that Oldfield of the French stage, whose beauty and intellect were the double charm which rendered theatrical France ecstatic, was hurriedly interred within a saw-pit. Bishops might be exceedingly interested in, and unepiscopally generous to, living actresses of wit and beauty, but the prelates smote them with a "Maranatha!" and an "Avaunt ye!" when dead. Even Bossuet would attend the theatre to learn grace and elocution from them and their brethren: but when he had profited by the instruction, he denounced them all as "children of the devil!" Louis XVIII., however, put an effectual check on the unseemly practice of treating as dead dogs the geniuses who had been idolised when living. When the priests of the Church of St. Roch closed its doors against the body of Rancourt, brought there for a prayer and a blessing, Paris rose against the insulters; and the King, moved by Christian charity, or dread of a Paris riot, sent his own chaplain to recite the prayer, give the benediction, and to show that an honest player was not a something less than a fellow-creature.

After the lying in state of Mrs. Oldfield, there was a funeral of as much ceremony as has been observed at the obsequies of many a queen. Among the supporters of the pall were Lord Hervey, Lord Delawarr, and Bubb Dodington, afterwards Lord Melcombe. The first used to ride abroad with Mrs. Oldfield, as Mrs. Delaney has recorded. Lord Delawarr was a

soldier who became a great "beau," and went a philandering. His wife and the Countess of Burlington headed the Faustina party at the opera against the faction which supported Cuzzoni. There were anthems, and prayers, and sermon; and Dr. Parker, who officiated, remarked, when all was over, to a few particular friends, and with some equivocation, as it seems to me, that he "buried her very willingly, and with much satisfaction." Her sons Maynwaring and Churchill were present, and the contemporary notices say that she had no other children. Her friends were apt to express a different opinion; and Mrs. Delaney, in one of the very first passages in her *Autobiography* says:—"At six years old I was placed under the care of Mdlle. Puelle, a refugee of a very respectable character, and well qualified for her business. She undertook but twenty scholars at a time, among whom were Lady Catherine Knollys, daughter to the" (self-styled) "Earl of Banbury, and great aunt to the present Lord; Miss Halsey, daughter to a very considerable brewer, and afterwards married to Lord Temple, Earl of Cobham; Lady Jane Douglas, daughter of the Duke of Douglas, and Miss Dye Bertie, a daughter of Mrs. Oldfield the actress, who, after leaving school, was the *pink of fashion* in the *beau monde*, and married a nobleman." Whom did this mysterious Diana marry?[1]

This daughter is not mentioned in Mrs. Oldfield's will; but to the two sons Mrs. Oldfield bequeathed the bulk of a fortune which she had amassed more

[1] She married J. Cator.—*Doran MS.*

by her exertions than by the generosity of their respective fathers. She was liberal, too, in leaving memorials to numerous friends; less so in her bequests to old relations of her sempstress and coffee-house days. A very small annuity was Narcissa's parting gift to her mother, who long survived her.

In such wise went her money; but whither has the blood of Oldfield gone? When Winnifred, the dairymaid, married into the family of the Bickerstaffes, she is said to have spoilt their blood, while she mended their constitutions. The great actress herself was at least an honest man's daughter, a man of fair descent. Her son, Colonel Churchill, once, unconsciously, saved Sir Robert Walpole from assassination, through the latter riding home, from the House, in the Colonel's chariot instead of alone in his own. Unstable Churchill married a natural daughter of Sir Robert, and *their* daughter Mary married, in 1777, Charles Sloane, first Earl of Cadogan. The son of this Mary is the present Earl, the great grandson of charming Anne Oldfield. When Churchill and his wife were travelling in France, a Frenchman, knowing he was connected with poets or players, asked him if he was Churchill the famous poet. "I am not," said Mrs. Oldfield's son. "Ma foi!" rejoined the polite Frenchman, "so much the worse for you!"

I have seen many epitaphs to her memory, but there is not one which is so complete and beautiful as the following, which tells the reader that she lies

amid great poets, not less worthy of praise than they, whose works she has illustrated and ennobled. It records the apt universality of her talent, which made her seem not *made*, but born for whatever she undertook. In tragedy, the glory of her form, the dignity of her countenance, the majesty of her walk, touched the rudest spectator. In comedy, her power, her graceful hilarity, her singular felicity, were so irresistible, that the eyes never wearied of gazing at her, nor the hands of applauding her.

"Hic juxta requiescit
Tot inter poetarum laudata nomina,
ANNA OLDFIELD.
Nec ipsa minore laude digna,
Quippe quæ eorum opera.
In scenam quotidies prodivit,
Illustravit semper et nobilitavit.
Nunquam ingenium idem ad parties diversissimas
Habilius fuit.
Ita tamen ut ad singulas
Non facta sed nata esse videretur,
In tragœdiis
Formæ splendor, oris dignitas, incessus majestas,
Tantâ vocis suavitate temperabantur.
Ut nemo esset tam agrestis, tam durus spectator,
Quin in admirationem totus raperetur.
In comœdia autem
Tanta vis, tam venusta hilaritas, tam curiosa felicitas
Ut neque sufficerent spectando oculi,
Neque plaudendo manus."

I have said that her last original part was Sophonisba. Among the last words she uttered in it, when mortal illness was upon her, were these :—

"And is the sacred moment then so near,
The moment when yon sun, these heavens, this earth
Shall sink at once, and straight another state,
New scenes, new joys, new faculties, new wonders,
Rise, on a sudden, round?"

These words were first spoken by her, on the last day of February 1730. On the 23rd of the following October she died, in her forty-seventh year. A week later, Dr. Parker "buried her very willingly, and with much satisfaction!"

Mrs. Clive as Mrs. Heidelberg.

GOODMAN'S FIELDS THEATRE.

CHAPTER II.

FROM THE DEATH OF ANNE OLDFIELD TO THAT OF WILKS.

Between the season of 1729–30, and that of 1733–34, great changes took place. It is correct to say, that the stage "declined;" but if we lose Mrs. Oldfield in the former period, we find some compensation at the beginning of the latter, by first meeting, in Fielding and Hippisley's booth, at Bartholomew and Southwark fairs, with one who was destined to enthral the town,—modest Mrs. Pritchard, playing Loveit, in a "Cure for Covetousness."

Meanwhile, Mrs. Porter reigned supreme; but the

stage was deprived, for more than a year, of the presence of her whom Mrs. Oldfield loved to address as "mother," by an accident which dislocated her thigh. Even after her recovery, the tragedy queen was forced to walk the stage with a crutched stick, which, like a true artist, she turned to account in her action.

Of actors of eminence, the greatest whom the stage lost was Wilks, airy and graceful down to the last;—of him, who died in 1732, I will speak more fully presently. Death also carried off quaint, squeaking, little Norris, the excellent comic actor, popularly known as "Jubilee Dicky." After Norris went Boheme, the pillar of the Lincoln's Inn Fields, a dignified and accomplished tragedian, whose Lear was full of antique grandeur and pathos;—it was, perhaps, the only character in which the former young sailor's quarter-deck walk was not discernible. Colley Cibber, too, must be reckoned among the departed, since he retired from the stage, at the end of the season 1732–33, but occasionally returned to it. He was disheartened by the break-up in the old partnership, and the manifest close of a period of prosperity. Booth had sold half of his share in the patent to a rich and silly amateur actor—Highmore. Wilks's widow, who inherited her husband's share, was represented by attorney; Colley was uneasy at having to encounter new partners, and he ultimately sold *his* share to Highmore, for three thousand guineas.

While the stage failed in players, it was not upheld by the poets. The gentlemen of the inns of court

hissed Charles Johnson's "Medea," and did not even applaud the satirical allusion contained in it to Pope. The town was weary of classical pieces. The "Eurydice" of Mallet—who had been gate-keeper at the Edinburgh High School, and had picked up learning enough to enable him to efficiently exercise the office of tutor in the Duke of Montrose's family—fared no better,[1] despite Mrs. Porter. The piece was as hard and as dry as granite; but the author thought it had as much pathos as his ballad of "William and Margaret."

In the prologue, tragedy was especially recommended to the patronage of ladies, because therein the character of women is exalted; while in the comedies of the day it was debased. But the epilogue, spoken by Miss Robinson, in boy's clothes—"born for this dapper age—pert, short, and clever"—showed that the poet did not much care for the female character.

Jeffreys' "Merope" had no better success. His cousins of the Chandos family may have laughed at the young collegian's bathos; but on the second night there was not audience enough to make a laugh comfortable; and the curtain did not rise.[2] Critics complained that all tragic action on our stage turned on love; and Jeffreys contrived to make three couple of nymphs and swains sigh or swear in this story of mother and son! "Who

[1] "Eurydice" was played about thirteen times, and was thought worthy of revival in 1759.

[2] This is the story told in the *Biographia Dramatica*, but Genest says "Merope" was acted three times.

could believe," says Voltaire, "that love could have been introduced into such a story? But, since the times of Charles II., love has taken possession of the English stage; and one must acknowledge that no nation in the world has painted that passion so badly." But Voltaire, you will remember, also said that Shakspeare was "a savage!"

A Gloucestershire squire, named Tracy, tried his hand on "Periander," and failed, though he was guiltless of a false quantity; unlike Addison's learned friend, Frowde, who tripped in his penultimates, with the alacrity of Hughes!

It was not altogether because our ancestors were weary of classical tragedies, that a short, fat, one-eyed, and well-to-do dissenter and jeweller, of Moorgate Street, reaped such a triumph, with his modern and domestic tragedy, "George Barnwell." *Mr.* Lillo had previously written a ballad-opera, "Sylvia;" but now he aimed to show the hideousness and consequence of vice. "George Barnwell" was first acted at Drury Lane, at the beginning of the Midsummer holidays of 1731. Theophilus Cibber played the hero; Mrs. Butler, Milwood. The audience looked for fun, and took the old ballad,—there was the flutter of a thousand copies in the house, to compare it with the play. Pope was present, and expressed an opinion that the language was often too elevated for the personages;[1] and the hearers thought only of the story as illustrated by Lillo, and every eye was weeping. It was the first fairly honest attempt

[1] Pope said "in a *few* passages."

made to amend, from the stage, the vices and weaknesses of mankind; and it certainly, in some degree, succeeded. It enlisted the sympathies of honest women. "The distresses of great personages," says a lady, in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, "have ceased to affect the town," and "none but a prostitute could find fault with this tragedy." Fault, however, was found; but the objection was answered in this way; —that "lowness of action was disallowed in a tragedy, but not lowness of character: the *circumstances* here are all important." One critic holds the story to be improbable; but contemporary journals furnish a parallel. A mercer's apprentice, who sleeps in his master's shop, admits a Milwood, who at a later hour refuses to leave, unless he will cut off satin enough to make her a robe. Great distress! but, at a happy moment, a virtuous porter arrives, who, on hearing the circumstances, and perhaps having seen the tragedy, lays hold of the lady, who had no more drapery about her than Lady Godiva, claps her into a sack, carries her off, and shoots her into a cart full of grains, standing unguarded. The naughty person is suffocated, if I remember rightly; but the honour of the apprentice is saved!!

"George Barnwell" brought domestic tragedy into fashion, and Charles Johnson closed his dramatic career with "Cœlia, or the perjured Lover," which was a warning to young ladies. Cœlia has a *bad* and a *good* lover,—warring principles! She prefers the former, with ruin for a consequence. He lodges her in a bagnio, where she is swept up by the

watch, in the arrest of all the inmates, and taken to Bridewell. Thence her very heavy father takes her home, while the good lover kills the bad one in a duel; but the latter politely requests that the avenger will consider Cœlia as having been his lawful wife. The lady, however, dies in her father's arms; the curtain comes down with a "tag," and then on tripped the epilogue, to ridicule all those present who were disposed to profit by the moral of the drama!

Theophilus Cibber's "Lover" was a sort of pendant to the "Nonjuror,"—Granger being in the habit of going regularly to church, and daily breaking the ten commandments. The only enjoyment the audience had,—who fought for or against the piece till blood flowed abundantly,—was in the epilogue, in which Mrs. Theophilus Cibber smartly satirised the failings of her lord! The audience relished it amazingly.

These were the principal novelties of the period about which I am treating; but I must add, that at the Haymarket, and at Goodman's Fields, where Giffard had created in Ayliffe Street a commodious theatre, far superior to the old throwster's shop, which had served an early dramatic purpose, in Leman Street, sterling old plays, with operettas and burlesques, were played at irregular seasons. Fielding especially distinguished and sometimes disgraced himself. He had not yet struck upon the vein which made him the first and most philosophical of English novelists; but he rose from his squibs and farces to the achievement of the "Miser," in itself an adaptation, but done by a master hand, and with a double result of

triumph,—to the author, and to Griffin, the clergyman's son, who played Lovegold. There were smaller attempts by smaller men, but these I omit, to record the failure of Quin in Lear,—a character which it was temerity to touch, so soon after Boheme had ceased to *be* the King. Mills made as great a mistake, when, at nearly sixty, he played for the first time—Hamlet. The public cared more for the pantomimic "Harlot's Progress," got up by Theophilus Cibber for Drury Lane, where this piece, preceded by "George Barnwell," must have been as edifying to both sexes as going to church,—a result in which Hogarth had full share with Lillo.

I have noticed the actors departing and departed, and the appearance in a booth of Mrs. Pritchard, a name yet to be famous and respected—like Mrs. Betterton's. So during this period I find a young player, Delane, at Goodman's Fields, who will advance to the first rank; but also a greater than he, Macklin, quietly playing any little part given him at Lincoln's Inn Fields, and securing his firm standing ground by the ability with which he acquitted himself at that house, when, in 1731, he was suddenly called upon to play Brazencourt,[1] in Fielding's "Coffee House Politicians." He had only four lines to speak; but those he spoke so well, that the true actor was at once discerned. One may fancy the tone and manner in which the rascal exclaimed: —"I was forced to turn her off for stealing four of

[1] Genest doubts this story, and gives very strong grounds for doing so. Vol. iii. pp. 306–8.

my shirts, two pair of stockings, and my Common Prayer Book." With such small opportunity, Mr. Maclean, as he was then called, led up to Shylock and Sir Pertinax Macsycophant!

Macklin was the last of the great actors who played at Lincoln's Inn Fields; and he did not leave Covent Garden until *after* the appearance there of Braham, who was yet among us but yesterday. The first-named house had never rivalled the success of Drury Lane, but Rich had gained enough to enable him to build a new house, and the last play acted in the Fields was Ravenscroft's "Anatomist," one of the worst of a second-rate author of King Charles's days. This was on December 5, 1732. Except for a few nights, irregularly, the old house never opened again. It was the third theatre which had occupied the site since 1662. In 1756 it was converted into a barrack. As late as 1848, it was Copeland's China Repository, when the old stage door and passage, through which Quin had so often passed, still existed.

There had been a long expressed desire for a new theatre; that is, not merely a new edifice, but a new system. The proposal embraced prospective delights for authors, such as they had hitherto never dreamed of. In the published prospectus it was stated that actors and authors should be excluded from the management, which was to be entrusted to individuals, who, at least, knew as little about it, namely, men of quality, taste, figure, and of a fortune varying from ten to twelve hundred pounds. A committee

was to be appointed, whose duty it would be, among others, to provide for the efficient reading of new plays, and for their being listened to with reverence and attention. It was calculated that the annual profit of such a theatre would amount to £3000 a year, and that out of it an annuity of £100 might be set aside for every author who had achieved a certain amount of success. In the following year, the *Weekly Miscellany* and the *Grub Street Journal* were very eager on the subject of theatrical reform. The former complained that high comedy and dignified tragedy had deserted the stage; remarked that plays were not intended for tradesmen! and denounced pantomimes and harlequinades as infamous. The Journal was rather practical than reflective. Old Exeter Change was then to let, and the Journal proposed that it should be converted into a theatre; adding a suggestion, which required above a century and a quarter to be carried into realisation, namely, that a college should be founded for decayed actors This college was to form the two wings of the theatre; which wings were to be inhabited respectively by the *emeriti* among actors, and destitute actresses, whose new home was to be within sound of the old stirring echoes of their joyous days. The direction of the establishment was to be confided to a competent governor and officers selected from among the decayed nobility and gentry; and the glory and profit resulting were calculated at a very high figure indeed!

On one result the *Grub Street* congratulated itself with unctuous pride. If the stage were reformed, the

universities and inns of court would supply actors. *Gentlemen*, said the *Grub Street*, with some arrogance, were reluctant to go among the scamps on the stage. Then, as for actresses, *Grub* rudely declared that every charity school could supply a dozen wenches of more decent education and character, of better health, brighter youth, more brilliant beauty, and more exalted genius, than the common run of hussies then on the stage; and a season's training, he added, would qualify them for business. This was a hard hit at men, among whom there were many well born; and at women, who, whatever they lacked, possessed the happy gifts of health, youth, beauty, and genius; but *Grub Street's* cynicism was probably founded on the fact, that he was not invited by the men, nor smiled on by the women.

A reform before the curtain was, however, now as loudly called for as behind it. One of the greatest grievances complained of this year was the insolence of the footmen. Occupying their masters' places, they lolled about with their hats on, talked aloud, were insolent on rebuke from the audience, and when they withdrew, on their masters' arrival, to their own gallery, they kept up a continual tumult there, which rendered their presence intolerable. What with the fine gentlemen on the stage, and their lacqueys, selected for their size, personal good looks, or fine hair, in the gallery, the would-be attentive audience in the pit were driven well nigh to desperation.

Much of this last grievance was amended when Covent Garden Theatre was opened on the 7th of

December 1732. The first piece acted was Congreve's "Way of the World;" Fainall by Quin, Mirabel by Ryan, who, with Walker, Hippisley, Milward, Chapman, and Neal, Mrs. Younger, Mrs. Bullock, and Mrs. Buchanan, formed the principal members of the company. Gay was not now alive to increase his own and Rich's fortune in this elegant and well-appointed theatre; but Rich produced Gay's operatic piece "Achilles," which represented the hero when lying disguised as a girl. By the treatment of the subject, Gay did not manifest the innocency to which he laid claim, nor show himself either in wit a man, or in simplicity a child. Theobald's adaptation of Webster's "Duchess of Malfy" (Bosola, by Quin; the Duchess, Mrs. Hallam), brought no credit on "King Log." Generally, indeed, the novelties were failures, or unimportant. The only incident worth recording is the debut of Miss Norsa, as Polly. But before greeting new comers, let us say a word or two of greater than they who have gone—of Wilks dead, and, by and by, of Cibber withdrawn. The loss of such actors seemed irreparable; but during this past season there had been a lad among the audience at either house, who was to excel them all. Meanwhile, he studied them deeply, and after times showed that the study had not been profitless to this boy of sixteen, whose name was David Garrick.

Quin's most brilliant days lay between this period and the ripening into manhood of this ardent boy. Before we accompany him through that time of triumph, let us look back at the career of Wilks.

PEG WOFFINGTON.

CHAPTER III.

ROBERT WILKS.

In Mr. Secretary Southwell's office, in Dublin, there sits the young son of one of the Pursuivants of the Lord Lieutenant; he is not writing a *précis*, he is copying out the parts of a play to be acted in private. His name is Robert Wilks, and the wise folk of Rathfarnham, near Dublin, where he was born in 1665, shake their heads and declare that he will come to no good.

The prophecy seemed fulfilled when the Irish wars between James and William forced him, an unwilling volunteer, into the army of the latter. As clerk to

the camp he is exempt from military duty; but he tells a good story, sings a good song, and the officers take him for a very pretty fellow.

Anon, he is back in the old Dublin office. At all stray leisure hours he may, however, be seen fraternising with the actors. He most affects one Richards; he hears Richards repeat his parts, and he speaks the intervening sentences of the other characters. This he does with such effect that Richards swears he is made for an actor, and the young Government clerk, fired by the fame of Betterton, is eager to leap from the stool, which his father considered the basis of his fortune, and to don sock and buskin.

His old comrades of the camp were then about to vary the monotony of life at the Castle, by getting up a play to inaugurate the new theatre, re-opened, like the Temple of Janus, at the restoration of peace. Judicious and worthy Ashbury was the only professional player. Young Wilks had privately acted with him as the Colonel in the "Spanish Friar." Ashbury now offered to play Iago to his Othello, and the officers were well pleased to meet again with their old clerk of the camp. The tragedy was acted accordingly. "How were you pleased?" asked Richards, who thought Wilks took it as a pastime. "I was pleased with all but myself," answered the Government clerk, who was thoroughly in earnest.

Wilks had gone through many months of probation, watched by good Joseph Ashbury, and honest Richards, when one morning the latter called on the young actor, with an introductory letter to Betterton

in his hand. Wilks accepted the missive with alacrity, bade farewell to secretaries and managers, and in a brief space of time was sailing over the waters, from the Pigeon House to Parkgate.

The meeting of Wilks and Betterton, in the graceful costume of those days, the young actor travel-worn, a little shabby, anxious, and full of awe; the elder richly attired, kind in manner, his face bright with intellect, and his figure heightened by the dignity of a lofty nature and professional triumph, borne with a lofty modesty, is another subject for a painter.

Betterton instructed the stranger as to the course he should take, and, accordingly, one bright May morning of 1690,[1] a handsome young fellow, with a slight Irish accent, presented himself to Christopher Rich as a light comedian. He was a native of Dublin county, he said, had left a promising Government clerkship, to try his fortune on the Irish stage; and, tempted by the renown of Betterton, had come to London to see the great actor, and to be engaged, if that were possible, in the same company.

Christopher Rich was no great judge of acting, but he thought there was something like promise of excellence in the easy and gentleman-like young fellow; and he consented to engage him for Drury Lane, at the encouraging salary of fifteen shillings a week, from which half a crown was to be deducted for instruction

[1] All dates regarding Wilks are difficult to determine; but as his appearance in Othello, previously referred to, took place at the end of the Irish Revolution—(Hitchcock says in December 1691)—this date, 1690, must be wrong. Besides, Rich does not seem to have obtained a footing in the theatre till March 1691.

in dancing! This left Wilks twelve and sixpence clear weekly income; and he had not long been enjoying it, when he married Miss Knapton, daughter of the Town Clerk of Southampton. Young couple never began life upon more modest means; but happiness, hard work, and good fortune came of it.

For a few years, commencing with 1690,[1] Wilks laboured unnoticed, at Drury Lane, by all save generous Betterton, who seeing the young actor struggling for fame, with a small salary, and an increasing family, recommended him to return to Ashbury, the Dublin manager, who, at Betterton's word, engaged him at £50 a year,[2] and a clear benefit. "You will be glad to have got him," said Betterton to Ashbury. "You will be sorry you have lost him," said he, to Christopher Rich. *Sorry!* In three or four years more, Rich was imploring him to return, and offering him Golconda, as salaries were then understood. But Wilks was now the darling of the Dublin people, and, at a later period, so universal was the desire to keep him amongst them, that the Duke of Ormond, Lord Lieutenant, issued a warrant to prohibit his leaving the kingdom. But, on the other hand, £4 per week awaited him in London. It was nearly as high a salary as Betterton's![3] Wilks, however, caring less for the terms than for the opportunity of satisfying his inordinate thirst for fame, contrived to escape, with his wife. With them came a disappointed actor, soon

[1] See previous note.
[2] Chetwood says sixty pounds.
[3] It was apparently the same salary as Betterton's.

to be a popular dramatist, Farquhar; who, in the year 1699, after opening the season with his "Love and a Bottle," produced his "Constant Couple," with Wilks as Sir Harry Wildair. On the night of Wilks's first appearance, in some lines written for him by Farquhar, and spoken by the *debûtant*, the latter said:—

> "Void of offence, though not from censure free,
> I left a distant isle, too kind to me;"

and confessing a sort of supremacy in the London over the *Dublin* stage, he added:—

> "There I could please, but there my fame must end,
> For hither none must come to boast—but mend."

This the young actor did apace. Applauded as the latter had been the year before, in old parts, the approbation was as nothing compared with that lavished on him in this his first original character. From the first recognition of Vizard down to the "tag" with which the curtain descends, and including even the absurd and unnatural scene with Angelica, he kept the audience in a condition of intermittent ecstasy. The piece established his fame, gave a name to Norris, the frequently mentioned "Jubilee Dicky," and made the fortune of Rich. It seems to have been played nearly fifty times in the first season. In its construction and style it is far in advance of the comedies of Aphra Behn and Ravenscroft; and yet it is irregular; not moral; as often flippant as witty; improbable, and not really original. Madam Fickle is to be traced in it, and the denouement, as far as

Lurewell and Standard are concerned, is borrowed from those of Plautus and Terence.

Wilks, now the great favourite of the town, justified all Betterton's prognostications. Like Betterton, he was to the end convinced that he might become more perfect by study and perseverance. Taking the extant score of judgments recorded of him, I find that Wilks was careful, judicious, painstaking in the smallest trifles; in comedy always brilliant, in tragedy always graceful and natural. For zeal, Cibber had not known his equal for half a century; careful himself, he allowed no one else to be negligent; *so* careful, that he would recite a thousand lines without missing a single word. The result of all his labour was seen in an ease, and grace, and gaiety which seemed perfectly spontaneous. His taste in dress was irreproachable; grave in his attire on the streets, on the stage he was the glass of fashion. On the stage, even in his last season, after a career of forty years, he never lost his buoyancy, or his young graces. From first to last he was perfection in his peculiar line. "Whatever he did upon the stage," says an eminent critic, quoted by Genest, "let it be ever so trifling, whether it consisted in putting on his gloves, or taking out his watch, lolling on his cane, or taking snuff, every movement was marked by such an ease of breeding and manner, everything told so strongly the involuntary motion of a gentleman, that it was impossible to consider the character he represented in any other light than that of reality; but what was still more surprising, that person who could thus

delight an audience, from the gaiety and sprightliness of his character, I met the next day in a street hobbling to a hackney-coach, seemingly so enfeebled by age and infirmities that I could scarcely believe him to be the same man."

The grace and bearing of Wilks were accounted of as natural in a man whose blood was not of the common tap. "His father, Edward Wilks, Esq., was descended from Judge Wilks, a very eminent lawyer, and a gentleman of great honour and probity. During the unhappy scene of our civil wars he raised a troop of horse, at his own expense, for the service of his royal master." A brother of the judge was in Monk's army,[1] with the rank of Colonel, and with more of honest intention than of commonplace discretion. The civil wars took many a good actor from the stage, but they also contributed the sons and daughters of many ancient but impoverished families to the foremost rank among distinguished players. Some of the daughters of these old and decayed houses thought it no disparagement to wed with these players, or to take humble office in the theatre. Wilks's first wife, Miss Knapton, was the daughter of the Town Clerk of Southampton, and Steward of the New Forest, posts of trust, and, at one time, of emolument. The Knaptons had been Yorkshire landholders, the estate being valued at £2000 a year; and now we find one daughter marrying Wilks, a second espousing Norris, "Jubilee Dicky," and a third, Anne Knapton, filling the humble office of dresser at Drury Lane, and

[1] Chetwood says that he commanded a troop in the King's army.

probably not much flattered by the legend on the family arms, "*Meta coronat opus.*"

The greatest trouble to Wilks during the period he was in management, arose from the "ladies" of the company. There was especially Mrs. Rogers, who, on the retirement of Mrs. Barry and Mrs. Bracegirdle, played the principal serious parts. It was the whim of this lady to act none but virtuous characters; her prudery would not admit of her studying others. In the epilogue to the "Triumphs of Virtue," in which she played the innocent Bellamira, she pronounced with great effect the lines, addressed to the ladies, for whose smiles, she said,

> "I'll pay this duteous gratitude; I'll do
> That which the play has done; I'll copy you.
> At your own virtue's shrine my vows I'll pay,
> And strive to live the character I play."

In this, however, she did not succeed; but Mrs. Rogers congratulated herself by considering that her failure saved Wilks's life, who, when a widower, protested that he should die of despair if she refused to smile upon him; but, as Cibber remarks, Mrs. Rogers "could never be reduced to marry."

Her ambition was great, for she not only looked on herself as the successor of Mrs. Barry and Mrs. Bracegirdle; but when the lively and graceful Mountfort (Mrs. Verbruggen) died, in giving birth to an infant, Mrs. Rogers aspired to the succession of her parts also. Wilks, then in power, preferred Mrs. Oldfield. A public clamour ensued; but, says Victor, somewhat confusedly, "Mr. Wilks soon reduced this

clamour to demonstration, by an experiment of Mrs. Oldfield and Mrs. Rogers playing the same part, that of Lady Lurewell in the "Trip to the Jubilee;" but though obstinacy seldom meets conviction, yet from this equitable trial the tumults in the house were soon quelled (by public authority), greatly to the honour of Mr. Wilks. I am," adds the writer, "from my own knowledge, thoroughly convinced that Mr. Wilks had no other regard for Mrs. Oldfield but what arose from the excellency of her performances. Mrs. Rogers' conduct might be censured by some for the earnestness of her passion towards Mr. Wilks, but in the polite world the fair sex has always been privileged from scandal."

As great a tumult ensued when Mrs. Oldfield was cast for Andromache, a character claimed by her rival, who, being refused by Wilks, "she raised a posse of profligates, fond of tumult and riot, who made such a commotion in the house, that the Court hearing of it, sent four of the royal messengers and a strong guard to suppress all disorder." Cibber laments having "to dismiss an audience of £150 from a disturbance spirited up by obscure people, who never gave any better reason for it than it was their fancy to support the idle complaint of one rival actress against another in their several pretensions to the chief part in a new tragedy."

A green-room scene, painted by Colley Cibber, reveals to us something of the shadowy side of Wilks's character, while that of Booth and Mrs. Oldfield stand out, as it were, "in the sun." Court

and city in 1725 had demanded the revival of Vanbrugh's "Provoked Wife," with alterations, to suit the growing taste for refinement. These alterations had taken something from the sprightliness of the part of Constant, which Wilks had been accustomed to play, and Cibber proposed to give it to Booth, for whom its gravity rendered it suitable. Wilks, who was eager to play every night, at first looked grave, then frowned; as Cibber hinted, that if he were to play in every piece, a sudden indisposition on his part might create embarrassment, he sullenly stirred the fire; but when the chief manager suggested that as he had accomplished all he could possibly aim at in his profession, occasional repose would become him more than unremitting labour, he took Cibber's counsel and Booth's acquiescence for satire, and retorted with a warmth of indignation which included some strong expletives not to be found in the best poets.

Cibber then accused him of inconsistency, and expressed indifference whether he accepted or rejected the part which he then held in his hand, and which Wilks at once threw down on the table whereupon the angry player sate, with crossed arms, and "knocking his heel upon the floor, as seeming to threaten most when he said least." Booth, good-naturedly, struck in with a cheerful comment, to the effect that, "for his part, he saw no such great matter in acting every day, for he believed it the wholesomest exercise in the world; it kept the spirits in motion, and always gave *him* a good stomach."

At this friendly advance Mrs. Oldfield was seen laughing behind her fan, while Wilks, after a few hesitating remarks, which showed some little jealousy of Booth, proposed that Mrs. Oldfield should herself select which of the two she would have play with her. He would be glad to be excused if she selected another.

"This throwing the negative upon Mrs. Oldfield," says Cibber, "was indeed a sure way to save himself; which I could not help taking notice of, by saying, it was making but an ill compliment to the company, to suppose there was but one man in it fit to play an ordinary part with her. Here Mrs. Oldfield got up, and turning me half round, to come forward, said with her usual frankness, 'Pooh! you are all a parcel of fools to make such a rout about nothing!' Rightly judging that the person most out of humour would not be more displeased at her calling us all by the same name."

Finally, Wilks accepted the part, at Mrs. Oldfield's suggestion, and all went well. Irascible as he was, yet he was more remarkable for his zeal and industry, for the carefulness with which he superintended rehearsals, and for the elaborate pains-concealing labour, which distinguished him on the public stage. Cibber renders him full measure of justice in this respect, and generously confesses: "Had *I* had half his application I still think I might have shown myself twice the actor that, in my highest state of favour, I appear to be."

Cibber, indeed, has painted his colleague Wilks with great elaboration. From Colley we learn that

Wilks excelled Powell, and that hot-headed Powell challenged him to the duello in consequence. So painstaking was the young Irishman, that in forty years he was never once forgetful of a single word in any of his parts. "In some new comedy he happened to complain of a crabbed speech in his part which, he said, gave him more trouble to study than all the rest of it had done." The good-natured author cut the whole of the speech out; but "Wilks thought it such an indignity to his memory that anything should be thought too hard for it, that he actually made himself perfect in that speech, though he knew it was never to be made use of." Cibber praises his sober character, but hints at his professional conceit, and somewhat overbearing temper; and he calls him "bustle master-general of the company." If he was jealous and impatient, "to be employed on the stage was the delight of his life;" and of his unwearied zeal, unselfishly exercised for the general good, Cibber cannot speak too highly. Nothing came amiss to Wilks that was connected with the stage. He even undertook the office of writing the bills of performance; but he charged £50 a year for the trouble.

In the plaintive and tender, this light comedian excelled even Booth, who used to say that Wilks lacked ear and not voice to make a great tragedian.[1]

[1] In the 2d edition Dr. Doran adds:—"He was not altogether original; for the *Tatler*, in 1710, advises him to 'wholly forget Mr. Betterton, for that he failed in no part of Othello but when he has him in view.' Thomson says of him, as the hero in Sophonisba, 'Whatever was designed as amiable and engaging in Masinissa, shines out in Mr. Wilks's action.'"

Wilks's greatest successes were in his friend Farquhar's heroes,—Sir Harry Wildair, Mirabel, Captain Plume, and Archer. He played equally well, but with less opportunity for distinction, the light gentlemen of Cibber's comedies. In Don Felix, in Mrs. Centlivre's "Wonder," he almost excelled the reputation he had gained in Sir Harry. "When Wilks dies," Farquhar once remarked, "Sir Harry may go to the Jubilee." Of the above characters he was the original representative, as he was of some fourscore others of less note,—among them Dumont, in "Jane Shore," for which he may be said to have been cast by Mrs. Oldfield. "Nay!" she cried to him, in her pretty way; "if you will not be my husband, I will act Alicia, I protest." And accordingly, the two most brilliant and gleesome actors of their day, enacted married tribulation, and kept their wreathed smiles for the crowd which clustered round them at the wings.

Few men ever loved acting for acting's sake more than Wilks. At the same time, no one ever warned others against it with more serious urgency. He had a nephew, who was in fair prospect of such good fortune as could be built up in an attorney's office. How little the young fellow merited the fortune, and how ill he understood the duties and advantages of attorneyship he manifested fully, by a madness for appearing on the stage. No counsel availed against his resolution; and, in 1714, Wilks despatched him to Dublin, with a letter to Ashbury, the manager. "He was bred an attorney," wrote the uncle, des-

pondingly, "but is unhappily fallen in love with that fickle mistress, the stage; and no arguments can dissuade him from it. I have refused to give him any countenance, in hopes that time and experience might cure him; but since I find him determined to make an attempt somewhere, no one, I am sure, is able to give him so just a notion of the business as yourself. If you find my nephew wants either genius or any other necessary qualification, I beg you will freely tell him his disabilities; and then it is possible he may be more easily persuaded to return to his friends and business, which I am informed he understands perfectly well."

Young Wilks proved as poor an actor as he probably was an attorney; but his uncle received him at Drury Lane, after a year's novitiate in Dublin, where he played, at first, better "business" than Quin himself. But he never advanced a step, and died at the age of thirty, having never obtained above that number of shillings a week. And for that, he deserted his vocation as an attorney, in the practice of which he might have gained, if not earned, at a low estimate, twice that amount in a single morning.

There was a pious young Duke of Orleans, who, to keep a fair character, was obliged to assume the fashionable vices of his day. Wilks, with all his love of home, was a fine gentleman among the fine gentlemen. His appreciation of matrimony was shown by the haste with which he espoused the widow Fell, daughter of Charles II.'s great gun-founder, Browne, in April 1715, after losing his first

wife in the previous year. During the first union, he must have trod the stage with many a heart-ache, while he was exciting hilarity, for eleven of his children died early, and the airy player was for ever in mourning. His stepson, Fell, married the granddaughter of William Penn, and brought his bride to the altar of St. Paul's, Covent Garden, not to be married, but christened. Wilks and his wife were the gossips to the pretty quakeress; and the former, probably, never looked more imposing than when he pronounced the names of the fair episcopalian,—*Gulielma Maria.*

Betterton used to rusticate in Berkshire; Booth, at Cowley; Cibber, at Twickenham; his son, at Brook Green. Wilks, too, had his villa at Isleworth. He is said to have kept a well-regulated and extremely cheerful home. He had there seen so much of death that we are told he was always prepared to meet it with decency. His generosity amounted almost to prodigality. "Few Irish gentlemen," says his biographer, "are without indigent relatives." Wilks had many, and they never appealed to him in vain. He died, after a short illness and four doctors, in September 1732,[1] leaving his share in the Drury Lane Patent, and what other property he possessed, to his wife. Throughout his life, I can only find one symptom of regret at having abandoned the Irish Secretary's office for the stage. "My successor in

[1] "5 Oct. 1732. Robert Wilks in the Church on the north side of the north aisle, under the pews Nos. 9 and 10" (*Reg. Burials, St. Paul, Covent Garden*).—*Doran MS.*

Ireland," he once said to Cibber, "made by his post £50,000."

Exceeding benevolence is finely exhibited in an incident connected with Farquhar. When the latter was near the end of his gay yet chequered career in 1707,—death, the glory of his last success, and the thought of his children pressing hard upon him, he wrote this laconic, but perfectly intelligible, note to Wilks:—"Dear Bob,—I have not anything to leave thee, to perpetuate my memory, but two helpless girls; look upon them, sometimes; and think of him that was, to the last moment of his life, thine,—GEORGE FARQUHAR." Farquhar's confidence in his friend was like that of La Fontaine, who, having lost a home, was met in the street by a friend who invited him to *his*. "I was going there!" said the simple-minded poet. Wilks did not disappoint Farquhar's expectations.

Wilks could be as modest as he was generous. After playing, for the first time, the Ghost to Booth's Hamlet,[1] the latter remarked, "Why, Bob, I thought you were going to knock me down. When I played the Ghost to Mr. Betterton's Hamlet, awe-stricken as he seemed, I was still more so of him."

"Mr. Betterton and Mr. Booth," said Wilks, "noble actors, could always play as they pleased. I can only play to the best of my ability." [2]

[1] This should be "playing *Hamlet* to Booth's *Ghost*," which makes all speculations whether Booth played Hamlet or not unnecessary. In point of fact, I do not think he ever did.

[2] Dr. Doran adds, in the 2d edition: "A writer in the *Prompter*, however, says that Booth would have been too solemn for the lighter

Once only do I find Wilks in close connection with royalty,—namely, when he took, by command, the manuscript of "George Barnwell" to St. James's, and read that lively tragedy to Queen Anne.[1] On some like occasion, King William once presented Booth with five pounds for his reward, but history does not note the guerdon with which Wilks retired from the presence of "Great Anna!"[2]

parts of Hamlet, 'if he had ever played the character.' Wilks's Hamlet was good only in the light and gayer portions, and in the scene in which at Ophelia's feet, Hamlet watches the king, Wilks's reading was perfection. In 'I say away!—Go on; I'll follow thee!' he addressed the whole line to the Ghost with a flourish of his sword; whereas, the first three words should be spoken to the two friends who struggle to keep him from following the apparition."

[1] Queen Caroline (2d edition).

[2] Caroline Dorothea (2d edition).

Mr. Clarke as Antonio.

GARRICK'S BIRTHPLACE, HEREFORD.

CHAPTER IV.

ENTER GARRICK.

GREAT was the confusion in, and small the prosperity of, the theatres after the death of Wilks, and withdrawal of Cibber. Highmore, now chief patentee, opened Drury; but Theophilus Cibber, with all the principal Drury Lane performers, except Mrs. Clive (for Miss Raftor was now the wife of Judge Clive's brother), Mrs. Horton, and Mrs. Bridgewater,[1] opened the Haymarket against him, under the title of "Comedians of His Majesty's Revels." Highmore had recourse to the law to keep the seceders to their engage-

[1] Bridgewater, not Mrs. Bridgewater.

ments, and Harper, a deserter to the Haymarket, was prosecuted as a stroller; but the law acquitted him, after solemn discussion. Highmore's chief actor was Macklin, who first appeared as Captain Brazen, Cibber's old part in the "Recruiting Officer," and he subsequently played Marplot, Clodio, Teague, Brass, and similar characters, with success; but he was cast aside when the companies became reconciled.

There was no other actor of note in the Drury Lane company, where good actresses were not wanting. Mrs. Clive alone furnished perpetual sunshine, and Mrs. Horton warmed the thin houses by the glow of her beauty. No piece of permanent merit was produced, and, sad change in the Drury Lane annals, the patentee was at a heavy weekly loss.

On the first night that the seceders opened the Haymarket, 21st September[1] 1733, with "Love for Love," Mrs. Pritchard played Nell, in the after-piece ("Devil to Pay"). The *Daily Post* had already extolled the "dawning excellence" she had exhibited in a booth, and prophesied that she would charm the age. She played light comic parts throughout the season; but her powers as a tragedian do not seem to have been suspected. Mrs. Pritchard thus entered on her long and honourable career, a married woman, with a large family, and an excellent character, which she never tarnished. Cibber's daughter, Mrs. Charke, played a round of male parts during the same season,[2]

[1] Should be 26th September.

[2] It would be more accurate to say that she played several "breeches" parts.

Roderigo, in "Othello," being one of them. In the March of 1734, the seceders closed the Haymarket, and joined the wreck of the old company at Drury Lane, on which Mrs. Pritchard, like Macklin, was laid aside for a time. But while those eminent players were "under a cloud," there appeared Miss Arne, whose voice charmed all hearers, whose beauty subdued Theophilus Cibber, but who was not yet recognised as the tragic actress, between whom and Mrs. Pritchard and Mrs. Yates, critics, and the town generally, were to go mad with disputation.

Meantime, no new drama was produced at Covent Garden, which lived in the public memory a month; but Quin shed a glory on the house, and quite eclipsed the careful, but heavy and decaying actor, Mills, who aspired to the parts which Booth's death had left unappropriated. In Macbeth and Othello, Thersites, Cato, Apemantus, and Gonzales, in the "Mourning Bride," he had at least no living rival. The contest for superiority had commenced before Booth's death; but Mills was never a match for Quin, and his name has not been preserved among us as that of a great actor.

As it is otherwise with Quin, let us recapitulate some details of his previous career, before we accompany him over that period which he filled so creditably, till he was rudely shaken by the coming of Garrick.

The father of James Quin was a barrister of a good Irish family, and at one time resided in King Street, Covent Garden, where James was born in 1693.

Mrs. Quin happened to be the wife of two husbands. The first, who had abandoned her, and who, after years of absence, was supposed to be dead, re-appeared after Quin's birth, and carried off the boy's mother as his own lawful wife.[1] Thereby, the boy himself was deprived of his inheritance; the Quin property, which was considerable, passed to the heir at law, and at the age of twenty-one, the young man, intelligent but uneducated, his illusions of being a *squireen* in Ireland being all dissipated, and being specially fitted for no vocation, went at once upon the stage. His time of probation was first spent on the Dublin boards, in 1714, where he played very small parts with such great propriety, that in the following year, on the recommendation of Chetwood, the prompter, he was received, still as a probationer, into the company then acting at Drury Lane. Booth, Cibber, Mills, and Wilks were the chief players at that theatre, and the young actor was at least among noble professors. Among, but not of them, he remained for at least two seasons, acting the walking gentlemen, and fulfilling "general utility," without a chance of reaching a higher rank. One night, however, in 1716, when the run of the revived "Tamerlane" was threatened with interruption by the sudden illness of the most ferocious of Bajazets, Quin was induced, most reluctantly on the foolish fellow's side, to read the part. In doing this with conscientiousness and

[1] Although Dr. Doran states this as if it were undoubtedly accurate, it is not certain that it is so. It is only one of several stories to account for Quin's requiring to earn a living on the stage.

judgment, he received such testimonies of approval, that he made himself master of the words by the following night, and when the curtain fell, found himself famous. The critics in the pit, and the fine gentlemen who hung about the stage, united in acknowledging his merits; the coffee-houses tossed his name about pleasantly as a novelty, and Mr. Mills paid him the compliment of speedily getting well.

When Mr. Mills resumed Bajazet, young Quin sank down to the Dervise; and though, subsequently, his cast of characters was improved, his patience was so severely tried, that in the succeeding season he passed over to the theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields. Modestly entering there in the part of Benducar, in "Don Sebastian,"[1] he at once established himself in the public favour, and before the close of the season 1718–19, the chivalry of his Hotspur, the bluntness of his Clytus, the fire of his Bajazet, the grandeur of his Macbeth, the calm dignity of his Brutus, the unctuousness of his Falstaff,[2] the duplicity of his Maskwell, and the coarse comedy of his Sir John Brute, were circumstances of which the town talked quite as eagerly as they did of the Quadruple Alliance, and the musket shot which had slain the royal Swede in the trenches before Frederickshall.

It was Quin's success in Bajazet at Drury Lane that really cost Bowen his life. I have noticed the subject before, but it will admit of some further

[1] I can find no authority for this. He made his first appearance as Hotspur on 7th January 1718. He played Benducar on 26th September 1718.

[2] He did not play Falstaff until 1720–21.

detail. Bowen had taunted Quin with being tame in Bajazet, and Quin retorted by speaking disparagingly of Bowen in Jacomo in the "Libertine," preferring Johnson in that part. Bowen was the more deeply stung as he prided himself on his acting in Jacomo, and the company agreed with the adverse critic. The quarrel, commenced by envy, was aggravated by politics. Bowen boasted of his honesty and consistency, a boast, the worthlessness of which was speedily shown by Quin's remark, that Bowen had as often drunk the Duke of Ormond's health as he had refused it. The disputants parted angrily, only to meet more incensed. They met, on the invitation of Bowen, and passed from one tavern to another, till they could find a room which less suited Quin's purpose than that of his irate companion—that of "fighting it out." Indeed, the younger player seems to have been hardly aware of his elder's definite purpose; for when they entered the room Bowen fastened the door, clapped his back to it, drew his sword, and threatened to run Quin through the body if he did not out with his rapier and defend himself. Remonstrance from the latter was of no avail, and he drew simply to keep Bowen off. But the latter impetuously pressed forward till he ultimately fell mortally wounded. Before his death, however, which occurred within three days, he justly and generously took the blame of the whole transaction upon himself. This, with corroborative evidence, secured the acquittal of Quin on his trial for manslaughter. So died poor, foolish Bowen, at the age

of fifty-two, leaving a widow, for whom the public had not sufficient sympathy to render her "benefit" profitable, and a son, known in the London streets as "Ragged-and-Tough," and whose exploits, recorded in the *Old Bailey Calendar*, sent him to the colonies to found in another hemisphere a line of Bowens more honest and less angry than the latter scions of the race in England.

This was a transition period, terminated by the coming of Garrick. Quin passed over to Drury Lane, tempted by the annual £500 offered by Fleetwood, a wealthy personage, who had purchased the chief share in the patent. "No actor," said Rich, "is worth more than £300 a year," and declining to retain Quin at the additional required outlay, he brought forward a "citizen," named Stephens, to oppose him. Stephens had caught the exact sound of Booth's cadences and much of his manner. For a time audiences were delighted, but the magic of mere imitation soon ceased to attract; and Quin decidedly led the town in old characters, but with no opportunity yet offered him of a "creation." Mrs. Clive enchanted her hearers at Drury Lane, while Mrs. Horton took her beauty and happy assurance to Covent Garden. A greater than either, Mrs. Pritchard, played mere walking ladies, and made no step in advance till 1735, when she acted Lady Townley at the Haymarket. Old Cibber longing again for a smell of the lamps, and a sound of applause, played a few of his best parts during this season, and Macklin slowly made progress according

to rare opportunity. Covent Garden chiefly depended on Ryan; but suddenly lost his services when they could be least spared. He was returning home, on the 15th of March 1735, when he was shot by a ruffian in Queen Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields, who robbed him of his sword. "Friend," said the generous actor, who was badly wounded in the face and jaw-bone, "you have killed me; but I forgive you!" In about six weeks, however, he was sufficiently recovered to appear again, after a general sympathy had been shown him, from the Prince of Wales down to the gallery visitors.

Drury Lane, too, lost, but altogether, an useful actor, Hallam. He and Macklin had quarrelled about a theatrical wig, and impetuous Macklin, raising his stick, thrust with it, in such blind fury, that it penetrated through Hallam's eye to the brain, and the unfortunate player died the next day. An Old Bailey jury let the rasher, but grief-stricken man, lightly off under a verdict of "Manslaughter."

From being a Queen of Song, Mrs. Cibber, the second wife of Theophilus, first took ground as an actress this season,[1] at Drury Lane, in Aaron Hill's adaptation of Voltaire's "Zara." Mrs. Cibber was the sister of Dr. Thomas Arne, the composer of "Artaxerxes," and daughter of an upholsterer in the neighbourhood of Covent Garden. Handel thought so well of her that he arranged one of his airs in

[1] Should be "next season." Ryan's accident and Hallam's death took place in 1734–35; Mrs. Cibber's appearance in 1735–36.

the "Messiah" expressly to suit her voice. Her ambition, however, was to be a tragic actress, and Colley Cibber, who had sternly opposed her marriage with his son, overcome by her winning ways, not only was reconciled to her, but instructed her in her study for Zara, and some part of her success was owing to so accomplished a teacher.

Milward played Lusignan, a part in acting which a young actor, named Bond, overcome by his feelings, died on the stage, while blessing his children.[1] This occurred at a private theatre, in Great Villiers Street, where the tragedy was represented, by sanction of the author, or, as Reed would have it, of the stealer of it from Voltaire. Bond was not the only actor who died in harness this year. Obese Hulett, rival of Quin, in Falstaff, proud of the strength of his lungs, which he was for ever exercising to the terror of those who suddenly experienced it, in making some extraordinary effort of this sort, broke a blood-vessel, and straightway died, when only thirty-five years of age; and he was buried at the expense of his stage-manager, Giffard, who rented Lincoln's Inn Fields, for awhile, of Rich.

The success of Mrs. Cibber stirred Rich at Covent Garden, and when she acted Hermione, the old but able Mrs. Porter played the part against her, at the

[1] Bond was not an actor, but apparently a distressed author. Davies expressly says that he was aged and infirm. It is scarcely correct to say that he died on the stage. He fainted on the stage and died the next morning.

latter house, as she also did Zara.[1] Mrs. Horton was opposed to her in the part of Jane Shore.[2] In high comedy, Mrs. Cibber attempted Indiana, in the "Conscious Lovers," and forthwith Covent Garden put up the same piece. But the latter house was inferior in its company; there was no one there to shed sunshine like Mrs. Clive. Delane and Walker together were not equal to Quin. Of novelty, Covent Garden produced nothing. Giffard's young troop, on the other hand, in the east, and afterwards at Lincoln's Inn Fields, produced much that was worthless, not excepting another levy on Voltaire by Hill, in his "Alzira." Indeed, the new authors of this period were more remarkable than their pieces. Mrs. Cooper, now forgotten, was the widow of an auctioneer; and Stirling, author of the "Parricide," is, perhaps, better remembered in Maryland, where he was a "popular parson," than he is here. What is known of him here, indeed, is not favourable. When he and Concanen came together from Ireland, to live by their pens, as political writers, they tossed up as to the "side" they should take. As it fell to Concanen to support, and to Stirling to abuse the ministry, the former was enabled to acquire an ample fortune as Attorney General of Jamaica, his seventeen years' tenure of which, Matthew owed to the appreciation

[1] Mrs. Cibber did not play Hermione. "The Distressed Mother" was played on 23d March 1736 for Theophilus Cibber's benefit, when Mrs. Cibber played Andromache. The Zara which Mrs. Porter acted was quite a different part from Aaron Hill's Zara, being the part in Congreve's "Mourning Bride."

[2] I cannot trace that Mrs. Cibber ever played Jane Shore. Alicia was her part.

of him by the Duke of Newcastle. But Matthew was a wit, and a gentlemanlike fellow; whereas the Rev. Jack Stirling, whose "Parricide" was hissed at Goodman's Fields,[1] was an unsuccessful parson, who did very well for a transatlantic minister.

The Haymarket was open in the spring and summer of 1736, under Fielding, with his "Great Mogul's Company of Comedians." Fielding, greatly improved by many failures, found the town in laughter; and Lillo drowned it in tears. At "Pasquin," that hot, fierce, hard-hitting, mirth-moving satire, London "screamed," night after night, for nearly two months; and at the "Fatal Curiosity," that most heart-rending of domestic dramas, the same London wept as if it had the tenderest feelings in the world. In it Cibber's daughter, erratic Mrs. Charke, condescended to play a female part; and Davies, the bookseller and dramatic historian, the part of her son, young Wilmot. By such means and appliances did the stage support itself through this year, in which Mrs. Pritchard is seldom heard of, and Yates and Woodward are only giving promise of the Sir Bashful Constant and Mercutio, to come.

And now we reach 1736–7, with Quin especially eminent in Shakspeare's characters, Mrs. Cibber, stirring the town as Statira, Monimia, or Belvidera, and Mrs. Clive—who had quarrelled with her as to the right to play Polly—beaming like sunshine through operatic farce and rattling comedy, as gaily as if her brow had never known a frown.

[1] It was played five times.

The old colleague of Quin—Mills (the original representative of characters so opposite as Zanga and Aimwell, Pylades and Colonel Briton), died all but on the stage, which lost in him a heavy "utility," whose will was better than his execution. A lady "utility," too, withdrew after this season,—Mrs. Thurmond, the original representative, also, of opposite characters, to wit—Myris, in Young's "Busiris," and Lady Wronghead.

The same Drury to which these were lost, gained this season a new author, in the person of Dodsley,—whose life is comprised in the words,—footman, poet, bookseller, honest man. As yet, he is only at the second step,—a poor poet; when he published books instead of writing them, he became a wealthy, but remained, as ever, a worthy fellow. It is due to this ex-lacquey to say, that in his satirical piece, the "Toy Shop," and in his hearty little drama, the "King and the Miller of Mansfield," both helped towards the stage by Pope, Dodsley gave wholesome food to satisfy the public appetite; and the man who had not long before stripped off a livery, showed more respect for decency than any wit or gallant of them all.

He was the only successful author of the season at Drury. The Rev. Mr. Miller broke a commandment, in his "Universal Passion,"—stolen from Shakspeare and Molière; and classical Mr. Cooke manifested no humour in converting Terence's "Eunuchus," into a satirical farce, the "Eunuch, or the Derby Captain,"—levelled at those English

emeriti whose regiments were disbanded after the peace of Utrecht, and who sipped their Derbyshire ale at a famous tavern in Covent Garden.

The chief incident before the curtain was a riot, caused by the footmen who had been excluded from their gallery, on the night of Macklin's benefit,—5th May 1737. But of this incident I shall speak in another page. Of Mrs. Pritchard there is barely an appearance; her great opportunity had not yet arrived.

At Covent Garden there was no new piece, but something better,—a revival of Shakspeare's "King John," in which Delane played the King, and Walker, Falconbridge,—a character for which he was personally and intellectually fitted, and in which, as in Hotspur, he gained more laurels than he ever acquired by his Macheath.

They who pursued novelty might find it with Giffard's company, playing at the Lincoln's Inn Fields, where, however, the only successful piece was "King Charles I.," a tragedy by Havard, a young actor, already known by his "Scanderbeg," and who succeeded to the place left vacant by Mills. Giffard played Charles, a character which is rather exaggerated by the author, who acted Juxon. Chesterfield said, in reference to this piece, that "the catastrophe was too recent, too melancholy, and of too solemn a nature to be heard of anywhere but in the pulpit." However this may be, the way in which the tragedy was composed was anything but solemn. Desultory Havard had been commissioned by Giffard to write

the piece. It was done to order, and under constraint; for the patron locked up the poet in a garret, near Lincoln's Inn, during a certain number of hours, daily, from which he was not suffered to emerge till he had repeated, from behind the door, to Giffard, who was on the landing, a certain number of newly-written lines,—till the whole was completed, when the poet became free.

At the Haymarket, Fielding and satire reigned, but not supreme,—for his pieces were as often hissed as applauded; but the political allusions in "Tumble-down Dick, or Phaeton in the Suds," pleased, and those in the "Historical Register for 1736," made the audience laugh, and Sir Robert Walpole, satirised as Quidnunc,[1] winced. The government had for some time contemplated a restriction of the licence of the stage. Hitherto, the Lord Chamberlain could stop a play in its career. It was now proposed to establish a licenser, according to whose report the Chamberlain might prohibit the play from entering on a career at all. The proposal arose out of an officious act of Giffard's, who took the manuscript of a satirical piece, called the "Golden Rump," to the minister, at which piece the latter was so shocked, that the bill for gagging the stage was at once proceeded with.

It was indecorously hurried through the Commons and tossed to the Lords, at the close of the session of 1737. There it met the sturdy opposition of Chesterfield. He looked upon the bill as an attempt, through restraining the licence of the stage, to de-

[1] Should be Quidam.

stroy the liberty of the press; for what was seditious to act, it would be seditious to print. And, if the printing of a play could be stopped, there would soon be a gag on pamphlets and other works.

The very act of Giffard showed that the players were anxious not to come in collision with government; and the existing laws could be applied against them if they offended. But those laws were not applied, or Mr. Fielding would have been punished for his "Pasquin," wherein the three great professions—religion, physic, and law—were represented as inconsistent with common sense. Chesterfield thought that the same law might have been put in force against Havard, for his "King Charles I."

If ministers dreaded satire or censure all they had to do was so to act as not to deserve it. If they deserved it, it would be as easy to turn passages of old plays against them, as to make them, in new. When the Roman actor, Diphilus, altered the words "Nostrâ miseriâ tu es magnus!"—a phrase from an old play—the eyes of the audience were turned on Pompeius Magnus, who was present; and the speaker was made to repeat the phrase a hundred times. Augustus, indeed, subsequently restored "order" in Rome; but God forbid that order should be restored here, at such a price as was paid for it in Rome!

False accusations, too, could be lightly made. Molière complained that "Tartuffe" was prohibited on the ground of its ridiculing religion, which was done nightly on the Italian stage; whereas he only satirised hypocrites. "It is true, Molière," said the

Prince de Conti, "Harlequin ridicules heaven and exposes religion; but you have done much worse,—you have ridiculed the first minister of religion."

Against the power of prohibition being lodged in one single man, Chesterfield protested, but in vain. One consequence, he said, would be, that all vices prevalent at court would come to be represented as virtues. He told the Lords that they had no right to put an excise upon wit; and said, finely, "Wit, my Lords, is the property of those who have it,—and too often the only property they have to depend on. It is, indeed, but a precarious dependence. Thank God!" he said, "we, my Lords, *have a dependence of another kind!*"

Such is the substance of his famous but unavailing remonstrance. The bill, not to protect morality, but to spare the susceptibilities of statesmen and placemen, passed; and the result was a "job." In the ensuing spring, Chetwynd was appointed, under the Chamberlain, licenser of plays, with a salary of £400 per annum; and to help him in doing little, Odell was named a deputy-licenser, with £200 yearly;—and therewith the job was consummated; and the deputy-licenser began to break the law he was appointed to see strictly observed. When the Act was passed, his most sacred majesty, who commanded unsavoury pieces occasionally to be played before him, prorogued the parliament, after lamenting the spirit of insubordination and licentiousness which pervaded the community!

The government made use of its authority, by pro-

hibiting plays, and the public took their revenge, by hissing those that were licensed. Among the prohibited, were Brooke's "Gustavus Vasa;" Thomson's "Edward and Eleanora;" and Fielding's "Miss Lucy in Town;"[1]—the first, as dangerous to public order; the second, as too freely alluding to royal family dissensions; the third (after it had been licensed) as satirising "some man of quality!" To these must be added "Arminius," by Paterson, Thomson's deputy in his post of Surveyor of the Leeward Islands. The deputy had copied out his principal's "Edward and Eleanora;" and as "Arminius" was in the same hand, it was forbidden, as being, probably, an equally objectionable piece by the same author! The prohibition applied to it was profitable; for he published his play by subscription, and gained £1000 by it,—not for the reason that it was a good, but because it was a forbidden drama.[2]

Audiences amused themselves by hissing the permitted plays, sometimes with the additional luxury of personal feeling against the author,—as in the case of the Rev. Mr. Miller's "Coffee House," "Art and Nature," and "Hospital for Fools." Thomson was fortunate in saving his "Agamemnon" from the

[1] It is very questionable whether this farce was prohibited. There is nothing in the bills to show that it was; and the *Biog. Dram.*, which says it was prohibited after having been played for some nights, is probably wrong. Fielding published "A Letter" to the Lord Chamberlain, on the subject of this farce; but the point of it is, why was "Miss Lucy" licensed, when less objectionable matter was condemned?

[2] Dr. Doran must refer to Brooke, who made £1000 by publishing "Gustavus Vasa." Paterson, I think, was not likely to be equally lucky.

censors, for it is not unworthy of ranking with the "Iphigenia" of Racine; and its merit saved it. Mallet was still more lucky with his "Mustapha;" and the audience were too pleased to hiss a piece, the licensers of which were too dull to perceive that Sultan Solyman and his vizier, Rustan, were but stage portraits of George II. and Sir Robert Walpole. They had no such tenderness for the "Parricide" of William Shirley,—a gentleman who understood the laws of trade better than those of the drama. A French company, at the Haymarket, were of course hissed out of the country. There was no ill-will against them, personally. It was sufficient that the Licensing Act authorised them to play, and the public would not tolerate them, accordingly! If they bore with Lillo's "Marina," it was, perhaps, because it was a re-cast of "Pericles;" and if they applauded his licensed "Elmeric," the reason may have been, that the old dissenting jeweller, who set so brave an example in writing "moral" pieces, was then dead; and the "author's nights" might be of advantage to his impoverished family.

But there were licensed dramas at which the public laughed too heartily, to have cared to hiss, or which so entranced them that they never thought of it. Thus, Dodsley's merry pieces, "Sir John Cockle," and the "Blind Beggar;" Carey and Lampe's hilarious burlesque-opera, the "Dragon of Wantley," and its sequel, "Margery;" with "Orpheus and Eurydice," one of Rich's burlesques and pantomimes—the comic operatic scenes not preceding, but alternating with

those of the harlequinade—in which, by the way, the name of Grimaldi occurs as pantaloon,—rode riotously triumphant through the seasons, which were otherwise especially remarkable, by numerous revivals of Shakspeare's plays, according to the original text; and not less so by that of Milton's "Comus," in which graceful Mrs. Cibber played and sang the Lady, and sunny Kitty Clive gladdened every heart, as Euphrosyne.

As far as new pieces are concerned, thus stood the stage till Garrick came. In further continuing to clear it for his coming, I have to record the death of Bowman, the best dressed old man at eighty-eight, and the cheeriest that could be seen. My readers, I hope, remember him, in the chapter on Betterton. Miller is also gone,—a favourite actor, in his day, whose merit in Irish characters is set down in his *not* having a brogue, which, at that period, was unintelligible to English ears. Miller played a wide range of characters; and he married for the very singular reason that, being unable to read the manuscript copy he had to get by heart, his wife might read it to, and beat it *into*, him. Bullock, too, the original Boniface and Gibby; and Harper, the original Jobson; and Ben. Griffin, quaint in Simon Pure, comic and terrific in Lovegold; with Milward, the original Lusignan; and Ben Jonson, always correct and natural,—have now departed. With them has gone Mrs. Hallam, an actress of repute,—the original Duchess of Malfy, in the revival of Webster's tragedy of horrors. By her death, the boards of old Drury

were relieved from a load of fourteen stone weight! —almost as great as that of Mademoiselle Georges.

Of those that were left, Quin was the great chief; but he received a rude shock from Macklin, when the latter, after playing Roxana, in a burlesque of the "Rival Queens," achieved his first triumph, by taking Shylock from low comedy, and playing it as a serious character.[1] The managers were as nervously afraid of a riot as those of the Ambigu were, when Frederic Lemaître, making no impression as the villain, Robert Macaire, during the first act of "L'Auberge des Adrets," played it through the rest of the piece as a comic part! In either case, the greatest success ensued, but that of Macklin was most honestly earned; and he took rank forthwith as one of the noble actors of his time.

Turning to other players, I find Mrs. Pritchard progressing from Lady Macduff to Isabella,—from Lucy to Viola and Rosalind. Walker meets a rival in the Macheath of mellifluous Beard. Woodward and Yates are rising to fame. Young Mrs. Cibber disappears for awhile, carrying with her the charms that strike the sight, and the merit that wins the soul. There is a terrible scandal in the cause of her disappearance. "Pistol," her worthless husband, has something more than pushed her into temptation, that he may make money by the offence to which he is the prompter. The public voice condemns him; a jury awards him damages, which show their contempt for his "sense of

[1] Macklin played Roxana on 17th May, 1738; Shylock on 14th February, 1741.

honour;" and the lady, running away from the house in which he had shut her up, while he was absent, playing that congenial character, Scrub—took for her better friend the man who had fallen in love with her through her husband's contrivance.

As if to compensate for the loss of Mrs. Cibber's honied tones, the stage was wakened to a new delight, by the presence of Margaret Woffington. This Irish actress made her first appearance at Covent Garden, on the 6th of November, 1740, as Sylvia, in the "Recruiting Officer;" and when, a few nights later, she played Sir Harry Wildair,—the ecstatic town were ready to confess, that in the new and youthful charmer they had at once recovered both Mrs. Oldfield and Robert Wilks. And yet this enchantress, so graceful, so winning, so natural, so refined, had commenced her public career as one of the children who were suspended by a rope from the ancles of Madame Violanti, when that wonder of her day exhibited her powers in Dublin on the tight-rope.

Loth to leave entirely, Colley Cibber now and then, at £50 a night, played a round of characters, always to crowded houses, but most so when he enacted some of his old beaux and fops. His Richard did not so well please; and one night, when playing this character, he whispered to Victor that he would give £50 to be in his easy chair again, by his fireside.

There was a Richard at hand who was likely to drive him there, and keep all others from the stage.

The season of 1741–42 opened at Drury, on September 5, with "Love for Love," and the "Mock Doctor." The additions to the company, of note, were Delane, Theophilus Cibber, and Mrs. Woffington. Quin was absent starring in Ireland. Covent Garden opened on October 8th with the "Provoked Wife." On the 19th of the latter month, while Drury was giving "As You Like It," and Covent Garden was acting the same piece, the little theatre in Ayliffe Street, Goodman's Fields, announced the "Life and Death of King Richard III.," "the part of King Richard by a gentleman who never appeared on any stage."

At last! the hour and the man had come. Throughout this season no new piece was produced at either of the patent theatres,[1] so influenced were they by the consequences of this first appearance of a nameless actor at Goodman's Fields. Of course, the new actor was David Garrick.

[1] "Miss Lucy in Town" was produced at Drury Lane this season.

IPSWICH THEATRE.

CHAPTER V.

GARRICK, QUIN, MRS. PORTER.

He had selected the part of Richard III., for reasons which now appear singular. "He had often declared," says Davies, "he would never choose a character that was not suitable to his person; for, said he, if I should come forth in a hero, or in any part which is generally acted by a tall fellow, I shall not be offered a larger salary than 40s. a week. In this," adds the biographer, "he glanced at the follies of those managers who used to measure an actor's merit by his size."

On that 19th of October 1741, there was no very great nor excitedly expectant audience at Goodman's

Fields. The bill of the day first promises a concert of vocal and instrumental music, to begin exactly at six o'clock; admission by tickets "at 3s., 2s., and 1s." Between the two parts of the concert, it is further announced that the historical play of the "Life and Death of Richard III.," with the ballad-opera of "The Virgin Unmasked," would be "performed *gratis* by Persons for their Diversion." The part of King Richard, "by a gentleman who never appeared on any stage," is an announcement, not true to the letter; but the select audience were not troubled therewith. From the moment the new actor appeared they were enthralled. They saw a Richard and not an actor of that personage. Of the audience, he seemed unconscious, so thoroughly did he identify himself with the character. He surrendered himself to all its requirements, was ready for every phase of passion, every change of humour, and was as wonderful in quiet sarcasm as he was terrific in the hurricane of the battle-scenes. Above all, his audience were delighted with his "nature." Since Betterton's death, actors had fallen into a rhythmical, mechanical, sing-song cadence. The style still lingers among conservative French tragedians. Garrick spoke not as an orator, but as King Richard himself might have spoken in like circumstances. The chuckling exultation of his "So much for Buckingham!" was long a tradition on the stage. His "points," indeed, occurred in rapid succession. We are told that the rage and rapidity with which he delivered

> "Cold friends to me! What do they in the North,
> When they should serve their sovereign in the West?"

made a wonderful impression on the audience. Hogarth has shown us how he *looked*, when starting from his dream; and critics tell us that his cry of "Give me another horse!" was the cry of a gallant, fearless man; but that it fell into one of distress as he said, "Bind up my wounds," while the "Have mercy, Heaven," was moaned piteously, on bended knee. The battle-scene and death excited the utmost enthusiasm of an audience altogether unused to acting like this. The true successor of Betterton had, at last, appeared. Betterton was the great actor of the days of Charles II., James II., William, and of Anne. Powell, Verbruggen,[1] Mills, Quin, were unequal to the upholding of such a task as Betterton had left them. Booth was more worthy of the inheritance; but after him came the true heir, David Garrick, the first tragic actor who gave extraordinary lustre to the Georgian Era.

And yet, for seven nights, the receipts averaged but about £30 a night; and Garrick only slowly made his way at first. Then suddenly the town was aroused. The western theatres were abandoned. "Mr. Garrick," says Davies, "drew after him the inhabitants of the most polite parts of the town. Goodman's Fields were full of the splendour of St. James's and Grosvenor Square. The coaches of the nobility filled up the space from Temple Bar to Whitechapel." Among these, even bishops might have been found. Pope came up from Twickenham, and without disparaging Betterton, as some old

[1] Verbruggen died before Betterton.

stagers were disposed to do, only "feared the young man would be spoiled, for he would have no competitor." Quin felt his laurels shaking on his brow, and declared that if this young man was right, he and all the old actors must be wrong. But Quin took courage. Dissent was a-foot, and he compared the attraction of Garrick to the attraction of Whitfield. The sheep would go astray. The throwster's shop-theatre was, in his eyes, a sort of conventicle. It would all come right by-and-bye. The people, he said, who go to chapel will soon come to church again.

Meanwhile let us trace the new actor through his first and only season in the far east. During that season, from the 19th of October 1741, to the 29th of May 1742, Garrick acted more comic than tragic characters; of the latter he played Richard (eighteen times), Chamont, Lothario, the Ghost in "Hamlet" (Giffard, the manager, playing the Dane), Aboan, King Lear, and Pierre. In comedy, he played Clodio ("Love Makes a Man"), Fondlewife, Costar Pearmain, Witwoud, Bayes, Master Johnny ("School Boy"), Lord Foppington ("Careless Husband"), Duretete, Captain Brazen, and two characters in farces, of which he was the original representative; Jack Smatter in "Pamela," and Sharp in the "Lying Valet." This is, at least, a singular selection.

The most important of his comic essays in his first busy season, when he frequently played in tragedy and farce, on the same night, without affecting to be wearied, was in the part of Bayes. His wonderful

powers of mimicry, or imitation, were not known till then; and in displaying them, his Bayes was a triumph, although other actors excelled him in that part, as a whole.

His great scene was at the rehearsal of his play, when he corrected the players, and instructing them how to act their parts, he gave imitations of the peculiarities of several contemporary actors. Garrick began with Delane, a comedian of merit, good presence, and agreeable voice, but, we are told, a "declaimer." In taking him off, Garrick retired to the upper part of the stage, and drawing his left arm across his breast, rested his right elbow upon it, raising a finger to his nose; he then came forward in a stately gait, nodding his head as he advanced, and in the exact tone of Delane, spoke the famous simile of the "Boar and the Sow." This imitation is said to have injured Delane in the estimation of the town; but it was enjoyed by no one more than by tall and handsome Hale of Covent Garden, where his melodious voice was nightly used in the character of lover. But when Hale recognised himself in the soft, plaintive accents of a speech delivered without feeling, he was as disgusted as Giffard, who was so nettled by Garrick's close mimicry of *his* striking peculiarities that he is said to have challenged the mimic, fought with him, and wounded him in the sword-arm. Ryan, more wisely, let Garrick excite what mirth he might from the imitation of the hoarse and tremulous voice of the former; and Quin, always expecting to be "taken off," was left

untouched, salient as were his points, on the ground, according to Murphy, of Quin's excellence in characters suited to him.

From a salary of £1 a night, Garrick went up at once to half profits. The patent theatres remained empty when he played at Goodman's Fields, and accordingly the patentees, threatening an application to the law in support of their privileges, shut up the house, made terms with Giffard, and Garrick was brought over to Drury Lane, where his salary was speedily fixed at £600 per annum, being one hundred more than that of Quin, which hitherto had been the highest ever received by any player.

His first appearance at Drury Lane was on May 11, 1742, when he played gratuitously for the benefit of Harper's widow, taking what was then considered the inferior part of Chamont, in the "Orphan," of which he made the principal character in the play. With Bayes, on the 29th,[1] Lear and Richard, each part played once, he brought his preliminary performances at Drury to a close. In June, 1742, after playing triumphantly during the brief remainder of the spring season at Drury Lane, Garrick, in company with Mrs. Woffington, crossed, by invitation, to Dublin. During an unusually hot summer he drew such thickly-packed audiences that a distemper became epidemic among those who constantly visited the ill-ventilated theatre, which proved fatal to many, and which received the distinction of being called the Garrick fever.

[1] Should be on the 26th.

Of course, Garrick had not equally affected all the judges. Neither Gray nor Walpole allowed him to be the transcendant actor which the town generally held him to be, from the first night of his appearance. "Did I tell you about Mr. Garrick, that the town are horn-mad after?" writes Gray to Chute; "There are a dozen dukes of a night at Goodman's Fields, sometimes; and yet I am stiff in the opposition." In May, 1742, Walpole writes in like strain to Mann:—"All the run is now after Garrick, a wine-merchant, who is turned player at Goodman's Fields. He plays all parts, and is a very good mimic. His acting I have seen, and may say to you, who will not tell it again here, I see nothing wonderful in it; but it is heresy to say so. The Duke of Argyll says he is superior to Betterton." The old Lord Cobham, who was then at Stowe nursing Jemmy Hammond, the poet, who was then dying for love of the incomparable Miss Dashwood, was of the same opinion with the Duke; but they could only contrast Betterton in his decline with Garrick in his young and vigorous manhood.

In November of the last-named year, Mrs. Pendarves (Delany) saw the new actor in Richard III. "Garrick acted," she says, "with his usual excellence; but I think I won't go to any more such deep tragedies, they shock the mind too much, and the common objects of misery we daily meet with are sufficient mortification." This lady, too, records the great dissensions that raged among critics with respect to his merits.

Before we accompany this great actor in his career of thirty years and upwards, let us close the present chapter by looking back over the path he has already passed, and which comes towards us, singularly enough, from Versailles, and the cabinet of the Great King!

Yes! When Louis XIV., on the 22nd of October, 1685, signed the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, he lost 800,000 Protestant subjects, filled Spitalfields, Soho, St. Giles, and other parts of England, with 50,000 able artizans, and gave David Garrick to the English stage!

The grandfather of David was among the fugitives. That he moderately prospered may be believed, since his son ultimately held a captain's commission in the English army. Captain Garrick married a lady named Clough, the daughter of a Lichfield vicar; and the most famous son of this marriage, David, was born at Hereford, his father's recruiting quarters, in February, 1716. In the same city was born Nell Gwyn, if that, and not Margaret Simcott, be her proper name. Her great grandson, Lord James Beauclerk, was not yet bishop of the place when Garrick was born, but a much more dramatic personage, Philip Bisse, *was*. This right reverend gentleman was the audacious individual who, catching the Duchess of Plymouth in the dark, kissed her, and then apologised, on the ground that he had mistaken her for a Maid of Honour. The lively Duchess, who was then the widow of Charles Fitz-Charles, natural son of Charles II., by Catherine Peg, married the surpliced Cory-

don. Their life was a pleasant comedy; and under this very dramatic episcopate was Roscius born.

His boyhood was passed at Lichfield, where he became more remarkable for his mania for acting than for application to school studies. At the age of eleven years, chief of a boyish company of players, he acted Kite, in the "Recruiting Officer," in which one of his sisters represented the Chambermaid, and to which Master Samuel Johnson refused to supply an introductory address. From Lichfield he made a trip to Lisbon, and therewith an attempt to fix himself in a vocation. His failure was no source of regret to himself. His uncle, a wine-merchant in the Portuguese capital, was not disposed to initiate the volatile lad into the mysteries of his craft, and David returned to Lichfield, with such increase of taste for the drama, that "several of his father's acquaintances," says Davies, "who knew the delight which he felt in the entertainment of the stage, often treated him with a journey to London, that he might feast his appetite at the playhouse." By this singular liberality, the ardent youth was enabled to see old Mills and Wilks, the two Cibbers, Ryan (of whose Richard, Garrick always spoke with admiration), and Quin. Booth was then stricken with the illness which ultimately killed him, and Garrick thus failed to study the greatest of actors between the era of Betterton and the coming time of Garrick himself. Of actresses the most important whom he saw, were Mrs. Porter, Mrs. Cibber, with whom he was destined to rouse the passions of many an audience, and Miss Raftor, who, as Mrs.

Clive, was afterwards to rouse and play with his own.

This ardent youth returned to Lichfield with more eager desire than ever to achieve fame and fortune on the stage. To supply what had been lacking in his education, he became the pupil of Samuel Johnson ; but master and scholar soon wearied of it, and they together left Lichfield for London, Garrick with small means and great hopes, Johnson with means as small, and his tragedy of " Irene."

The resources of David were speedily increased by the death of his uncle, who bequeathed him a thousand pounds, with the interest of which David paid the cost of instruction which he received from the Rev. Mr. Colson. Other opportunities failing, he joined with his brother Peter in the wine trade, in Durham Yard, where, said Foote, in after years, and with his characteristic ill-nature, " David lived, with three quarts of vinegar in the cellar, calling himself a wine-merchant." Had the father of David been at home, instead of on service at Gibraltar, the latter would probably have been a Templar student ; but Garrick hated the study of the law, and, out of deference to his mother, the vicar's daughter, he refrained from appearing on the stage ; but when both parents had passed away, within the same year, Garrick, who had studied each living actor of mark, and even recorded his judgment of them, anonymously and honestly, in the public papers, left the stock in trade at Durham Yard to his senior partner and brother. In 1741, a diffident young gentlemen, calling him-

self himself Lyddell,[1] made his first appearance on the stage ; at Ipswich. He selected the part of Aboan for two reasons : that it was a secondary character, and that Aboan was a "black." The attempt presented less difficulty, for the first reason ; and failure need not be followed by recognition, seeing that his features would be half-concealed under "colour." The attempt, however, was fairly successful, but not a triumph. David went earnestly into training. He played every species of character, solemn tragedy heroes, high and low comedy, and even that incarnation of the monkey in man, as Alphonse Karr calls him, the bustling, glittering, active, and potent Harlequin.

His career of a few months at Ipswich was as the preparatory canter of the high-mettled racer over the course. All who witnessed it augured well of the young actor ; and Giffard, the manager, agreed to bring him out in London in the autumn of the same year, 1741, at that theatre, in Goodman's Fields, which had been made, twelve years previously, out of a throwster's shop. It had been opened, without competent licence, by Odell, the dramatist, and subsequently deputy licenser of plays under the famous Act which Walpole introduced and Chesterfield opposed. Odell was so conscientious, or so prudent, that in consequence of a sermon preached against the theatre, in one of the Aldgate churches, he sold his interest to Giffard, who enlarged the house, and opened it in 1732. After a struggle of three seasons' dura-

[1] Davies and Murphy both give the name as "Lyddal."

tion, the determined opposition of the Eastern puritans drove him to Lincoln's Inn Fields. He returned, however, at the end of two years; and maintained his position with varying fortunes, till at length, in 1741, he brought Mr. Lyddell,[1] now Mr. Garrick, from the banks of the Orwell to the neighbourhood of the old gate, where the statues of Love and Charity still stood, and near which, crowds soon awoke such echoes as had not been heard in the vicinity since the godlike effigies were first erected.

In the season of 1742–43, Garrick acted about eighty nights,—Hamlet, thirteen times; Richard and Bayes, eleven; Archer, nine; Lear, six; Fondlewife and Hastings, four; Chamont, three; Plume, Clodio, and Pierre, twice; Abel Drugger, once; Wildair, created by him in Fielding's "Wedding Day," Lothario, Millamour,[2] and Sharp, occasionally.[3] Of *these*, Wildair was a decided failure.

Quin played against him at Covent Garden, Richard, Chamont, Lear, and Pierre, but in these he proved no competitor. He fell back on his general repertory, and, among many other characters, played

[1] Lyddal.

[2] Should read:—"Millamour, created by him in Fielding's 'Wedding Day,' Lothario, Wildair."

[3] This list is very inaccurate. It is obviously taken from Genest, iv. 38, but Dr. Doran has mistaken the meaning of Genest's list, which includes only those nights for which the bill is not given in the text. The record should stand thus:—Hamlet, fifteen times; Richard and Bayes, fourteen; Archer, eleven; Lear, seven; Fondlewife and Hastings, five; Chamont, four; Plume, five; Clodio, four; Pierre, three; Abel Drugger, four or five times, it cannot be decided which. Then the Schoolboy must be added to the list of occasional characters; and it should be noted that there are no bills for April 1st, 2nd, and 3rd.

Falstaff, Macbeth, Othello, and Brutus, none of which Garrick assumed this year. Garrick's Fondlewife was opposed by that of Hippisley at Covent Garden, and that of Cibber, the younger, at Lincoln's Inn Fields. His Hamlet was encountered by that of Ryan, at Covent Garden, to Quin's Ghost; and a counter-attraction to his Lothario was set up in those of Ryan and of the silly amateur, Highmore, the latter at Lincoln's Inn Fields. From all competition, Garrick came out triumphant.

Of Lincoln's Inn Fields, this was the "positively final" season. Giffard managed the house with judgment, but he lost there some of the wealth which he had acquired at Goodman's Fields, and out of which he purchased the ground on which he built Coventry Court, locality of gloomy reputation, near the Haymarket. Dulwich College was a wiser investment of money acquired in the theatre.

Covent Garden lost, this year, a great actress in Mrs. Porter, who commenced her theatrical career as theatrical attendant to Mrs. Barry, and was one of the old players of King William's days. Among the most marked of her original representations were Araminta, in the "Confederacy;" Hermione, Lucia, in "Cato;" Alicia, in "Jane Shore;" Lady Woodville, in the "Nonjuror;" Leonora, in the "Revenge;" and Lady Grace, in the "Provoked Husband." Few details of her life are known.

Genest combines the testimonies of Victor and Davies in describing Mrs. Porter as the genuine successor of Mrs. Barry, to whom the former had long

played the "confidantes" in tragedy, and from the great mistress learned her noble art. We are told that Mrs. Porter was tall and well made, of a fair complexion, but far from handsome; her voice, which was naturally tender, was by labour and practice enlarged into sufficient force to fill the theatre, but by that means a tremor was contracted to which nothing but custom could have reconciled the audience. She elevated herself above all personal defects by an exquisite judgment. In comedy, her acting was somewhat cold and inefficient; but in those parts of tragedy where the passions predominate, she seemed to be another person, and to be inspired with that noble and enthusiastic ardour which was capable of raising the coldest auditor to animation. She had a dignity in her mien, and a spirited propriety in all characters of rage; but when grief and tenderness possessed her, she subsided into the most affecting softness. She acted the tragic parts of Hermione and Belvidera with great applause. Booth, who was no admirer of Mrs. Oldfield in tragedy, was in raptures with Mrs. Porter's Belvidera. She excelled particularly in her agony, when forced from Jaffier, in the second act, and in her madness.

After the dislocation of her limb, and in advanced age, she still acted with vigour and success. In Queen Elizabeth ("Albion Queens"), she turned the cane she used on account of her lameness, to great advantage. After signing Mary's death warrant, she "struck the stage," says Davies, "with such charac-

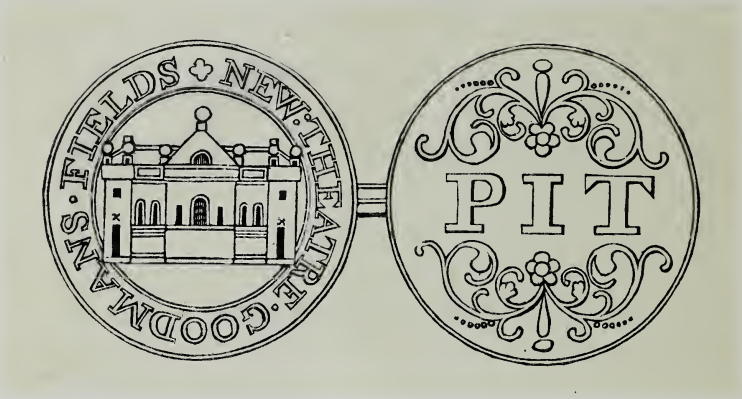
teristic vehemence that the audience reiterated applause."

On Valentine's night, 1743, the Prince and Princess of Wales were present at her farewell benefit, when she played this Queen Elizabeth, under august patronage. The fine old lady seems to have fallen into some distress, for in 1758 she published, by five shillings subscriptions, for her benefit, the comedy of "The Mistakes, or the Happy Resentment," which had been given to her by Pope's Lord Cornbury, the son, but not destined to be the heir, of the last of the Hydes, who bore the title of Earls of Clarendon. He was a dull writer, but so good a man, that Walpole says, in reference to Pope's line—

"Disdain what Cornbury disdains"—

"it was a test of virtue to disdain what he disdained." After his death, by falling from a horse in France, the decayed tragedy queen published the play. The old and favoured servant of the public modestly says, that her "powers of contributing to their amusement are no more," but that she "always retains a grateful sense of the indulgence she had received from those who have had the goodness to accept her inclination and endeavours to please, as real merit." Nothing could be more modest, but the truth is that this was written *for* Mrs. Porter by Horace Walpole. The subscription list was well filled,—the Countess Cowper, whose letters figure in Mrs. Delany's memoirs, taking fourscore copies.

Let us now return to the renewed struggles of the rival houses, made fiercer by the rise of a new actor.



A PIT ADMISSION CHECK.

CHAPTER VI.

RIVALRY; AND ENTER, SPRANGER BARRY.

HITHERTO, under the mismanagement of the lazy and reckless patentee, Fleetwood, Drury Lane had fallen to a level with Sadler's Wells—tumblers and rope-dancers being put forward as the chief attractions. Even after Garrick's accession, gross mismanagement continued, and drove the principal actors, whose salaries were often unpaid, into open rebellion. They sought permission from the Lord Chamberlain, the Duke of Grafton, to open the theatre in the Haymarket on their own account. But the grandson of Charles II. sneered at the fact of an actor earning

£600 a year, when a relative of his own, in the navy, repeatedly exposed his life, in the king's service, for half that sum. The duke put constraint on them to return to their allegiance to Fleetwood. The latter dictated hard terms to most of them, except to Garrick, and he flatly refused to receive Macklin at all. This exclusion brought on a remarkable theatrical riot. The confederate actors had agreed to triumph or to fall together. To allow Macklin to be sacrificed to the resentment of Fleetwood, was a betrayal on their part of the compact. Macklin appealed to the town, and Roscius would have been driven from the stage but for Fleetwood's hired pugilists, who pummelled one portion of the audience into silence, and enabled the whole house to enjoy, after all, what they most cared for—the acting of Garrick, undisturbed. In this season, 1743–4, Roscius did not appear till the 6th of December,[1] when he acted Bayes. Between that night, and the close of the season, on the 31st of May, he played in all seventy times. His most marked success was in Macbeth, in the tragedy "written by Shakspeare," when he had Mrs. Giffard for his Lady; he repeated this part thirteen times. Covent Garden opposed to him, first Quin, in Davenant's alteration of Shakspeare, and subsequently Sheridan, who on the 31st of March

[1] There is some obscurity about this date. Garrick's handbill in answer to Macklin's "case" says that the latter was published in order to prejudice him *that night*, and the bill is dated 5th December 1743; but, in succeeding advertisements, the disturbance is alluded to as "Tuesday night's" riot. Now Tuesday was certainly the 6th, not the 5th.

1744, made his first appearance at Covent Garden, in opposition to Garrick, as Hamlet.

The force of the two theatres will be better understood, perhaps, if I show the exact amount of the opposition brought to bear against each other. Garrick's Richard was met by that of Ryan; the Lord and Lady Townley of Garrick and Mrs. Woffington, by those of Ryan and Mrs. Horton; the Hamlet and Ophelia of the former two, by those of Ryan (and afterwards of Sheridan) and Mrs. Clive. Garrick and Mrs. Giffard, in "Macbeth," were opposed, first by Quin, then by Sheridan and Mrs. Pritchard, who played everything, from the Thane's wife to Kitty Pry. To oppose to him an amateur, like Highmore, in Lothario, was absurd; Quin's Lear had no weight against the mad old king by his young rival; and Mrs. Charke's Plume, one of the many male characters which Cibber's daughter loved to play, was pale, compared with that of the universal actor.

All the above were honourable competitors; but there also appeared this season an actor, who became Garrick's personal enemy—namely, Foote. The latter commenced his career at the Haymarket, February 6, 1744, as Othello, to the Iago of Macklin, who had opened that house with a "scratch company," including "pupils"—while he was disengaged at Drury Lane. Foote also played Hamlet,[1] to the Ghost and First Gravedigger of Macklin; and did

[1] It is extremely improbable that Foote was the unnamed "Gentleman" who played Hamlet on this occasion.

not find his vocation, as he thought, in such parts as Lord Foppington.

At both patent houses the "Beggars' Opera" was produced; at Drury, the Macheath and Polly were Blakes and Miss Budgell, an illegitimate daughter of Eustace Budgell; at the Garden, Cashell's Macheath gave way to that of Beard, while the Polly and Lucy of Kitty Clive and Mrs. Pritchard, at the same theatre, charmed the auditors for a time, and gave them pleasant memories for a long period to come.

The literature of the stage did not make progress this season. Classical Cooke selected an assize case of murder in Kent, and spoiled its terrible simplicity in his "Love the Cause." To Havard's cold, declamatory tragedy, "Regulus," Garrick gave warmth and natural eloquence; but even *his* Zaphna, admirable as it was in "Mahomet," would not have saved the Rev. Mr. Miller's adaptation from Voltaire, had that part of the public who hated the adapter, known to whom they were indebted for it. Miller ended his uneasy life, during the run of the play, a representation of which, after his death, contributed a hundred pounds to the relief of his widow and children.

In the season of 1744–45, the old opposition was feebly sustained on the part of Covent Garden, but with some novelty appended—especially in the case of a ballad-singer like Cashell, attempting Hamlet against Garrick![1] Further, the King John of the

[1] Cashell's Hamlet was a personal eccentricity on his benefit night; not an attempt on the part of the theatre to oppose Garrick.

latter in Shakspeare's play was opposed to old Cibber's alteration of the same piece, produced at Covent Garden, as "Papal Tyranny," in which Quin played the King, and toothless, nerveless Cibber, Pandulph. The indulgent audience pitied the quavering old player.

Garrick's King John was a fine, but not the most perfect of his performances; he was happy in such a Constance as Mrs. Cibber. Quin congratulated himself on having such a Hubert as Bridgewater, the ex-coal-dealer. The value of Cibber's mangling of Shakspeare, got up to abuse the Pope, because of the Pretender, may be conjectured by a single instance — that John is too shy to hint at the murder of Arthur till Hubert has "shut the window-shutters." The modesty of the mangler may be more than guessed at from the fact, that Cibber—in his own words—"endeavoured to make it more like a play than I found it in Shakspeare!"

Quin, to witness his rival's impersonation of Othello to the Iago of Macklin, went to Drury, in company with Bishop Hoadley's son, the doctor. Foote, in the previous February, had announced that his Othello would "be new dressed, after the manner of his country." Garrick, on his entrance, looked so ill in Quin's jealous eyes, that he compared him to Hogarth's black boy, and said to Hoadley, "Why doesn't he bring in the tea-kettle and lamp?" Great as Quin was in mere declamation, Garrick excelled him in the address to the senate.[1] Victor

[1] Very doubtful. The statement rests on Victor's authority.

describes the falling into, and the recovery from, the trance, as "amazingly beautiful;" but he honestly told Garrick that the impersonation was short of perfection. Murphy states that Garrick had the passions at command, and that in the sudden violence of their transitions he was without a rival.

Garrick attempted Scrub with less success, and Quin had no reason to be disquieted by his rival's Sir John Brute. Quin's Othello was a favourite with the town; but in that part Garrick had a more formidable rival in Sheridan, and the most formidable in Barry. The only original character he played this season was Tancred, in Thomson's "Tancred and Sigismunda," a play too sentimental and stilted, too poor in incident, and too little varied in character, in spite of its occasional richness and sweetness, to interest an audience, in these days. It was otherwise, at the time of its first appearance, when with Garrick, Tancred; Sheridan, Siffredi; Delane, Osmond; and Mrs. Cibber, Sigismunda; the town sighed, wept, and moaned over the love trials of the celebrated pair. Garrick's Tancred is warmly eulogised by Davies, who describes Garrick and Mrs. Cibber as "formed by nature for the illustration of each other's talents. In their persons," he says, "they were both somewhat below the middle size. He was, though short, well made; she, though in her form not graceful, and scarcely genteel, was, by the elegance of her manners and symmetry of her features, rendered very attractive. From similarity of complexion, size, and countenance, they could have been easily supposed brother

and sister; but in the powerful expression of the passions, they approached to a still nearer resemblance. He was master of all the passions, but more particularly happy in the exhibition of parts where anger, resentment, disdain, horror, despair, and madness predominated. In love, grief, and tenderness, she greatly excelled all competitors, and was also unrivalled in the more ardent emotions of jealous love and frantic rage, which she expressed with a degree of sensibility in voice, look, and action, that she never failed to draw tears from the most unfeeling."

A change of proprietorship in the Drury Lane patent afforded Garrick an excuse for repairing to Dublin. His rival, Sheridan, invited him, not concealing his dislike, but professing readiness to meet all his requirements. With some difficulty the terms were arranged, and Garrick appeared in various characters, alternating them with Sheridan, and playing frequently with a new actor, young Barry, who was afterwards to become the most dreaded and the most brilliant of his rivals.

For a long series of years the Irish stage had been, with rare exceptions, in a pitiable condition. At one time three houses were open, with a public only sufficient for one. Managing committees of noblemen made the confusion worse confounded, and seven managers, known as the "seven wise men," only exhibited their folly and incapacity. There were performers of merit at from twelve shillings to a guinea a week, who seldom obtained half their salaries. On one occasion, we hear of the acting managers coming

down to the theatre, one evening, when, on comparing notes, they were all found to be dinnerless, for want of cash and of credit. With the first money that was paid at the doors they obtained a loin of mutton, with the next they sent for bread, and with a third supply they procured the generous beverage they most required; and then dined behind the scenes while the performance was in progress.

Sheridan's management produced a thorough reformation; and when Garrick appeared, on the 9th of December 1745, as Hamlet, the sensation was extraordinary; but it was increased when Garrick, Barry, and Sheridan acted in the same plays—the "Orphan" and the "Fair Penitent." Then, the enthusiasm was unbounded. In the latter play, Barry is said to have so distinguished himself in Altamont as to have raised that character to a level with those of Lothario and Horatio, played respectively by Garrick and Sheridan. This was the most successful season ever known in Dublin. During its progress Garrick played but one character he had never played before,—Orestes,[1] and that he never repeated in England. His objection to wear the old classical costume, or what then passed for it, was extreme. His sojourn in Dublin was otherwise not void of incident. There was one thin house, and that by command of a leading lady of fashion, on the night of his playing Faulconbridge to Sheridan's King John. The part of Constance belonged by

[1] Faulconbridge and Iago seem also to have been new characters this season.

right to that sparkling young beauty, Mrs. Bellamy. Garrick thought her too youthful to enact the mother of Arthur, and he persuaded Sheridan to give the part to an older actress, Mrs. Furnival. The angry Bellamy flew to lay her wrongs before the most influential woman then in Dublin, the Hon. Mrs. Butler, whose word, throughout the Irish world of fashion, passed for law. Mrs. Butler espoused the suppliant's case warmly, and issued her decree, prohibiting the world over which she ruled from visiting the theatre on the night "King John" was to be played. As she gave excellent dinners and exquisite balls, she was obeyed by all ages and both sexes, and the "quality," at least, left the actors to play to empty boxes.

Garrick had recovered from the attendant mortification, when he asked Mrs. Bellamy to play Jane Shore to his Hastings, for his benefit. The lady declined. If she was too young for Constance, she was too young for Jane Shore. Garrick applied to Mrs. Butler to use her influence, but it availed nothing. He addressed a high-flown letter to Mrs. Bellamy: "To my soul's idol, the beautified Ophelia;" but the epistle fell into wrong hands and found its way into the papers.

Roscius, before leaving Ireland, paid homage to the Hon. Mrs. Butler, by taking leave of her in a formal visit. With equal formality, as the visitor was about to depart, the lady placed in his hands a small packet. It contained, she said, her own sentiments and convictions, and, in presenting it to Mr.

Garrick, all that she requested was, that he would abstain from too curiously inquiring into its contents until he had sailed out of Dublin Bay. The actor had vanity enough to lead him to think that, within the mysterious packet might be enclosed some token of affection, perhaps an acknowledgment of love. He obeyed the lady's injunctions till the ship, which was conveying him to Holyhead, had passed the Hill of Howth, then, "by your leave, fair seal!" and he arrived at the heart of the mystery. Carefully unfolded, he found a copy of *Wesley's Hymns* and of *Swift's Discourse on the Trinity.* In his disappointment he is said to have flung both books into the sea; but I think he may have had better taste, and that he took Mrs. Butler's remembrances with him to London.

Before proceeding to chronicle the leading events of the next London season, it remains to be stated that in the last season at Covent Garden, there was one first appearance of note; that of George Anne Bellamy, on the 22d of November, 1744, as Monimia, in the "Orphan." Rich persuaded this gifted but self-willed girl to become an actress, greatly to the displeasure of Quin, who objected to perform Chamont to such a child. In the first three acts her terrors rendered her so incapable, that old Quin's objections seemed justified; but, recovering her power with her courage, the brilliant young creature played with such effect that Quin embraced her after the act-scene dropped, pronounced her "divine," and declared that she was of the "true spirit." She sensi-

bly strengthened a company already strong, in Mrs. Pritchard, Mrs. Clive, and Mrs. Horton. On the 15th of April, 1745, Shuter, from Richmond, appeared at Covent Garden, in the "Schoolboy," under the designation of *Master* Shuter.

At the Haymarket, Theophilus Cibber revived some of Shakspeare's plays, and produced his daughter Jane in Juliet and other parts; but Colley compelled him to withdraw his daughter, and the Lord Chamberlain forced him to close an unlicensed house, which, however, his eccentric sister, Mrs. Charke, contrived to keep open for a while, playing there Captain Macheath and other male characters before she attempted to pass herself off on the world, or hide herself from it, as a man.

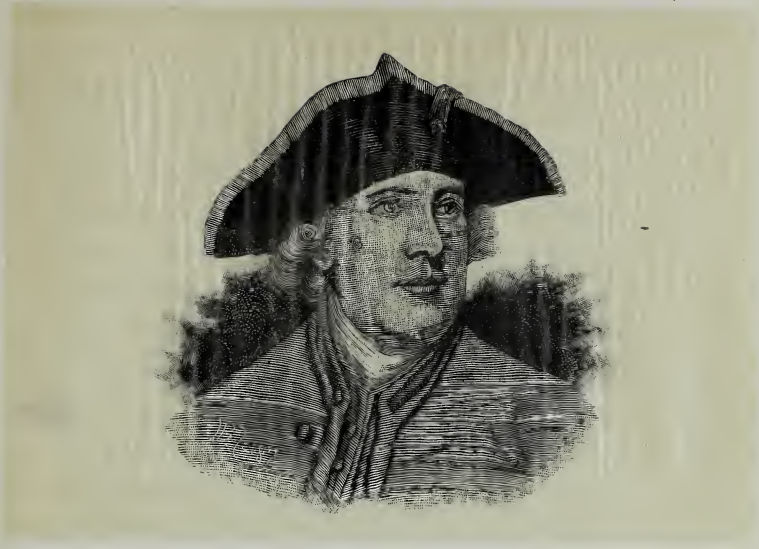
There is this irregularity in the season of 1745–46, that neither Garrick, nor Quin, nor Mrs. Cibber was engaged at either house. The public was more concerned with the Scottish Rebellion than with the drama. Loyal Lacy, who had succeeded the incapable Fleetwood in the patent, applied for leave to raise 200 men in defence of King and Government; and the whole Company of Drury Lane players expressed their willingness to engage in it. The spirit which some hundred years before had animated the loyal actors, now moved Delane, and Luke and Isaac Sparks, with Barrington—all three newly come from Ireland—Mills, with orthodox Havard, Bridges, Giffard, Yates, Macklin, Neale, and Foote. The ladies, Clive, Woffington, Macklin, mother and daughter, Mrs. Giffard, and the rest,

applauded the loyal confederacy. The "Nonjuror" was revived with Luke Sparks as Dr. Wolf, because of its political allusions. Macklin in six weeks wrote his "Henry VII., or the "Popish Impostor," and distributed it act by act for study, and he sent the Pretender, Perkin Warbeck, to execution without much succouring King George. Ford's ultra-monarchical piece, on the same subject, was revived at Goodman's Fields, and Covent Garden rehearsed another to no effect, as the Rebellion was over before the piece could suppress it. The "Massacre at Paris," with its story of the pretensions of the Duke de Guise (Ryan) and its famous Protestant prologue, was among the Covent Garden revivals. The Scottish rebellion being over, Theophilus Cibber congratulated the audience thereon at Drury; and Mrs. Pritchard, at the Garden, after acting Arpasia in "Tamerlane," recited an exulting prologue, which Dodsley printed in his best type. Both houses gave benefits for the "Veteran Scheme" at Guildhall, for which scheme Mrs. Cibber offered to play three nights, *gratis*, but was snubbed by a hyper-Protestant in the papers. The handsome Catholic actress indignantly replied, that her love for King George was not diminished by her faith in the Romish religion. The whole matter ended merrily by George II. and the entire royal family repairing to Covent Garden, where "Macbeth" was performed, and a rebel and regicide put to death to the great satisfaction of the royal, noble, gentle, and simple audience there congregated.

I do not know which of the new comers, named above, so struck Lady Townshend, that she told Horace Walpole, in September, 1745, "she had seen a new fat player, who looked like everybody's husband." Walpole replied, "I could easily believe that from seeing so many women who looked like everybody's wives!"

In all other respects, there is little worthy of notice, save that, at the close, when all was jubilee again, and Charles Edward no longer an object of fear, Garrick re-appeared in London. He arrived in town in May, 1746. Rich and Lacy were both eager to engage him, but the former succeeded, and Garrick closed the season at Covent Garden, by playing six nights at £50 per night. Thus he gained more in a week than Betterton, ere he was a "master," had gained in a year. Lacy, meanwhile, had secured Barry, and the town were eager to hear him of the silver-tongue. Garrick generously said of him, in answer to a query respecting the merits of the Irish actor, that he was the most exquisite lover that had ever been seen on the stage. Barry proved the truth of this criticism, by excelling Garrick in Romeo, in which the latter was so fervent, the former so winning and so seductive.

Before we proceed to notice the coming struggle, let us cast back a glance at the stage from whence this master came.



JAMES LACY.

CHAPTER VII.

THE OLD DUBLIN THEATRE.

But for a murder in the house of a Mrs. Bungy, Dublin would not have had its famous old theatre in that locality, which the popular voice *would* call by the name of *Smock Alley* (from the handsome hussies who lived there), long after Mrs. Bungy's house and those adjacent to it had been swept away, and the newer and finer edifices were recorded as standing in "Orange Street." The first theatre in this questionable locality was erected soon after the Restoration; but at the period named, this house and theatricals, generally, were

opposed with as much bitterness in Dublin as in Edinburgh.

I learn from Gilbert's "History of Dublin" that, in 1662, the Chapter of Christchurch expressed its horror at "one of the stipendiaries of the church having sung among the stage-players in the play-house, to the dishonour of God's service and disgrace to the members and ministers of the church." The ultra-religious portion of the Dublin community hated the theatre, with all their hearts, and to such persons two little incidents occurred to the play-house in Smock Alley, which must have been peculiarly pleasant to their humane yet indignant hearts. One was, that in 1671, the gallery of the above-mentioned house being over-crowded, fell into the pit. The consequences, of course, were lamentable, but, you see, those godless players were acting Jonson's "Bartholomew Fair," and what could be expected when that satire on the super-righteous was raising a laugh in the throats of the Philistines? Again, in 1701, a part of the same house fell in during a representation of Shadwell's "Libertine," and nothing could seem more natural than this catastrophe, to the logical bosoms of the upright; for at the devil's jubilee, Satan himself was present, and carried home with him the lost souls of his children. Even the play-going public grew a little suspicious of the stability of the building, but they were re-assured by the easy certificate of a "Surveyor-general," who asserted that there was no chance of a failure in the holdfasts and supports of the edifice, *for several years!*

In half-a-dozen years, however, the house was down; and, in seven months, the new house was open to an eager public. The latter, however, were not quite so eager to enter as the managers were to receive them. "So eager were they to open, that they began to play before the back part of the house was tiled in, which, the town knowing, they had not half an audience the first night, but mended leisurely by degrees."[1] It was in the old house that Elrington, the great support of Drury Lane when Booth was indisposed, ruled supreme in the hearts and houses of his enthusiastic Irish admirers. His old patrons never forgot him. "I have known," says one already quoted, "Tom Elrington in the part of Bajazet to be heard all over the Blind Quay; and I do not believe you could hear Barry or Mossop out of the house."

We are here, however, anticipating events. Let us return to chronological order. In the old houses, heavy classical tragedy seems to have been most popular; and when Dublin was tired of it, the company took it to Edinburgh. Rough times of war closed the house; but when William's authority was firmly established, theatrical matters looked up again, and in March, 1692, Ashbury, who, with Mr. and Mrs. Betterton, had instructed the Princess Anne how to speak and act Semandra, in "Mithridates," when that piece was played at Whitehall, opened the house with "Othello," playing Iago to the Moor of Robert Wilks. Among this early company are

[1] This refers to the new Smock Alley, 1735.

also to be noted Booth, Estcourt, Norris, Bowen, and Trefusis, contributions from England, and the latter so admirable for dancing the rustic clown, that General Ingoldsby once handed him a £5 note from his box, and gave him a second when Joe went up to the Castle to thank him,—the General not recognising him till Trefusis imitated his dialect and action of the night before.

The ladies were not in force; Mrs. Knightly, Mrs. Ashbury, and Mrs. Hook, were the principal under Ashbury, who added the names of Quin and the two Elringtons, and Mrs. Thurmond, to his company, before he closed a management of about thirty years. In that period, Ashbury raised the Irish stage to a prosperous and respectable position. His son-in-law, Thomas Elrington, succeeded him in the management.

Under Elrington's rule, young Stirling first awaked the Irish muse to tragedy, and Charles Shadwell furnished the house with half-a-dozen pieces of very inferior merit. Meanwhile, in 1727, Madame Violanti opened a booth, with her wondrous rope-dancing, and her Lilliputian company, whose representation of the "Beggar's Opera" excited a perfect sensation. The Macheath was a Miss Betty Barnes; Polly, Miss Woffington; Peachum, Master Isaac Sparks; and Filch, Master Barrington,—all of these were, subsequently, players of more or less renown.

Up to this time, the best native actor was Wilks, now we have Peg Woffington; in 1728 appeared the

handsome, young Delane, of Trinity College; his graceful figure, full-toned voice, added to his zeal and application (both too short-lived), rendered him an unusual favourite. In the same company were Mr. and Mrs. Ward, whose daughter, born at Clonmel, was the mother of "the Kembles."

Elrington died in 1732. He was the first actor who played Zanga in Dublin; much to the admiration of Dr. Young, who thought Mills mouthed and growled the character overmuch. After Elrington's death, disorder sprung up. Smock Alley was opposed by a new theatre, erected in Rainsford Street, in the "Earl of Meath's Liberty," and beyond the jurisdiction of the mayor. At the former, the company, including, occasionally, some of the best actors from London, was better than the house which was so decayed, that a new, a much grander, but in every other way a less efficient house, was erected in Aungier Street, at which the tall, cold beauty, the ex-quakeress, Mrs. Bellamy, mother of George Anne Bellamy, was a principal actress. A committee of noblemen managed this house, with the usual result of enormous loss. Dublin having more theatres than could prove profitable, the old theatre in Smock Alley was pulled down; but a new one was erected, which was opened in December 1735, with "Love for Love." [1] In which Don Duart was played by Cashel, subsequently a popular Macheath. He was one of the many actors who have died, or received their death-stroke, on the stage. While acting Frankly, in the "Suspi-

[1] Should be, "Love Makes a Man."

cious Husband," at Norwich, in 1748, he was smitten by apoplexy and died in a few hours.

The Theatre Royal in Aungier Street had its real opponent in this house, opened by licence of the Lord Mayor, in the more central position, in Smock Alley. The house in Rainsford Street was soon closed. London performers, who were sure of profitable benefits, went over to both houses; but I much prefer to remark that, at Aungier Street, in February 1737, Margaret Woffington, her childhood being past, first appeared as an actress, in the part of Ophelia. Her beauty, grace, her ease, simplicity, her pretty singing, her coquetry, and the wonderful "finish" of the male characters she afterwards assumed, gave a fortune to the theatre, which was only checked by the famine of the severe winter 1739–40, during which the houses were closed for three months.

This theatre in Aungier Street had a company so powerful, including Quin, Delane, and Mrs. Cibber, at the close of the London season, that, on its re-opening, in 1741, Smock Alley, with Elrington, Isaac Sparks, and Mrs. Furnival,[1] could not successfully compete with it; but, in June 1742, Duval, the proprietor, by engaging Giffard, Mrs. Woffington, and Garrick, turned the scale, and during three of the hottest months of the hottest summer ever known, attracted crowds to Smock Alley, and spread fever over the city!

After success, and when the great players had disappeared, came re-action, empty houses, tumblers,

[1] And Thomas Wright, who seems to have been principal actor.

rope-dancers, equestrianism, — and nightly losses. On the 29th of January 1743, however, the town felt a new sensation, afforded by the acting of a "young gentleman" in Richard, at Smock Alley. The Mithridates of the debutant was as successful as Richard, and then the young actor was known to be the son of Dr. Sheridan, a young man of three-and-twenty, whose appearance on the stage brought great vexation to all his friends. But also much reputation to himself in Richard, Brutus, Hamlet, Othello, Cato, and the highest walks of comedy.

A curious incident carried Sheridan to the rival house in Aungier Street. One night in July 1743, his robe for Cato was not forthcoming from the Smock Alley wardrobe, and Sheridan refused to play without it. Theophilus Cibber was there among the London birds of passage. He was cast for Syphax, and his offer to read the part of Cato and play his own was accepted. Cato and Syphax are never on the stage together; but in the second act, Theophilus must have been put to it, for there, Syphax enters close upon the heels of the retiring Cato.

How the "numerous and polite audience" enjoyed the piece thus represented, I cannot say; a paper war ensued, and Sheridan passed to the other house. But two houses could not exist, and an agreement was at length made to consolidate the two companies, and to open at Aungier Street, whereupon the rejected actors, of course, opened Smock Alley, and thence came confusion worse confounded, till Sheridan, quarrelling with the proprietors at Aun-

gier Street, passed back to Smock Alley, and did something towards retrieving its fortunes. But he was ill seconded, and in March, 1744, flushed by his new honours, he crossed the Channel and appeared at Covent Garden.

And now, instead of two companies in one house, Dublin saw one company alternately playing in two houses, with little profit, till on the night of February 15th, 1744, "Othello" was given at Smock Alley, the part of Othello by Spranger Barry (Iago, Wright; Desdemona, Mrs. Bailey). His noble person, his harmonious voice, his transitions from love to jealousy, from tenderness to rage, enchanted the audience, though in some respects the performance was unfinished. His principal characters were Othello, Pierre, Hotspur, Lear, Henry V., Orestes, and that once favourite comedy-character with young tragedians, Bevil, jun. Barry filled the house every night he played; but, I suppose, a feature of Irish management, he played only occasionally. Foote, in this his first Irish season, drew a few good houses, but Barry was the chief attraction. He was opposed by the old ejected comedians, who opened a temporary house in Capel Street, which, however, was soon closed.

Under mismanaging committees of noblemen, three dozen in number, with seven wise men for a quorum, affairs went ill, and Sheridan was, at length, invited from England to take sole government, and restore order and profit where anarchy and poverty reigned. This Sheridan effected, by degrees, aided by his

judgment, industry, zeal, perseverance, and unflinching honesty. During his first season, 1745–46, he produced, first, Miss Bellamy, on November 11th, at Aungier Street, in the "Orphan," to the Castalio of Barry, and his own Chamont; and in the following month Garrick appeared as Hamlet. In the "Fair Penitent" Garrick, Barry, and Sheridan played together to the Calista of Mrs. Furnival; and "All for Love" was cast with Antony, Barry; Ventidius, Sheridan; Cleopatra, Miss Bellamy; Octavia, Mrs. Furnival; Garrick and Sheridan played Richard and Hamlet alternately, and each in turn played Iago to Barry's Othello. The following season brought Barry to England, where he laid the foundations of a great professionial glory which endured as long as Garrick's, though it was somewhat tarnished and enfeebled, yet still second only to Garrick's towards its close.

GARRICK AND MRS. ABINGTON IN THE "SUSPICIOUS HUSBAND."

CHAPTER VIII.

GARRICK AND QUIN; GARRICK AND BARRY.

This new actor, Spranger Barry, who has come to London to wrestle, as it were, with Garrick, is now in his twenty-seventh year, and has been but two years, brief noviciate, on the Irish stage. He had previously followed, with some reluctance, the vocation of his father, that of silversmith; but, respectable and lucrative as it was, the stage had more attraction for him, and thither he went in pursuit of fame and fortune, nor missed the object he pursued

so steadily. His success in Ireland was great at a time when there was a body of players there, which for ability has certainly never been surpassed. Spranger was very well connected, and it was by the counsel of his kinsman, Sir Edward Barry, that he turned his face towards London, and resolved to try a fall there with David Garrick.

His first appearance was at Drury Lane, October 2, 1746,[1] in the character of Othello; Iago, Macklin; Cassio, Mills; Roderigo, Yates; Desdemona, Mrs. Ridout; Emilia, Mrs. Macklin. What aspirant entering on a struggle of a similar nature now, would be gratified with such notice as the press, in the *General Advertiser*, awarded to the new actor, on this occasion? "Barry performed Othello before a numerous and polite audience, and met *with as great applause as could be expected.*"

And the triumph *was* as great as the player could have hoped for. In some things, Barry profited by the suggestions and teaching of Macklin; and the fact that for nearly eighty nights, about half of which were given to Othello, Lord Townley, and Macbeth, Barry drew crowded houses, will show that a new and dangerous rival had sprung up in Garrick's path, at the moment he was contending with a skilled and older rival at Covent Garden. In the earlier part of the season, Garrick had played Hamlet, King Lear, Richard, Archer, Bayes, and Chamont; Quin had played Richard, with no success; Cato, Bajazet, and Sir John Brute. The two met together for the first

[1] Should be October 4.

time in the same piece, on the 14th of November 1746, in the "Fair Penitent;" Horatio, Quin; Lothario, Garrick; Altamont, Ryan; Calista, Mrs. Cibber.

This was the greatest theatrical event that had occurred for years; and when the actor of the old school, and he of the new met on the stage, in the second act, the audience who now first saw them, as they had long wished to see them, face to face, absolutely disconcerted them by a hurricane of greeting —a perfect storm of gratulation, expressed in every way that applause can be given, but in louder and longer peals than had ever been heard by actors of that "generation." When it had passed, every word was breathlessly listened to; every action marked. Some were won by the grand emphasis and the moral dignity of Quin; others by the grace, spirit, and happy wickedness of Garrick. Between them, it was difficult to award the palm of supreme distinction to either—and Mrs. Cibber was, for once, forgotten. They subsequently played together Falstaff and Hotspur; and Hastings and Glo'ster, repeatedly, in "Jane Shore." Glo'ster was one of Quin's "strut and whisker parts," and Garrick had such advantage over him in Hastings, that "the scale was now completely turned in Garrick's favour."

Was it from fear that Garrick declined to play Jaffier to Quin's Pierre? It could not have arisen from fatigue, as alleged, for Garrick wrote a capital farce, "Miss in her Teens," and played Fribble in it, and then *created* Ranger, in Dr. Hoadley's "Suspicious Husband," in which Quin declined the part of

Mr. Strictland, and gave to Bridgwater the one opportunity which he seized, of being considered an actor. In Ranger, Garrick surpassed even what old playgoers could recollect of comic excellence. His "Neck or nothing; up I go!" became a popular saying, and the rendering it was a tradition on the stage, from his days to the days of Elliston, the gentlemanly impudence, and the incomparable grace of whose Ranger is still remembered by many among us.

The originality of style and expression in this comedy displeased Quin. He was a conservative, and disliked innovation; contemptuously called the piece a speaking pantomime—forgetful that the old comedies were often much more farcical (which is what he meant) in their incident, and when a name for it was being discussed, suggested scornfully "The Hat and Ladder." Some of Hoadley's friends kindly foretold failure, in order to afford consolation after a kind. Thence the epigram of one of them:—

> "Dear doctor, if your comic muse don't please,
> Turn to your tragic and write recipes."

Not merely as a character piece, but for construction of plot, simplicity and grace of style, and comparative purity of speech and action, the "Suspicious Husband" is the best comedy the eighteenth century had, up to this time, produced. It has a good story clearly and rapidly developed, and the persons of the drama are ladies and gentlemen, and not the dully-

vivacious ruffians and the unclean hussies of the Aphra Behn, the Etherege, and Sedley period. The writer was a "royal physician," and son to the famous bishop who, for his opposition to civil and ecclesiastical tyranny, was treated as if he were an infidel. The bishop did not go to witness his son's play; but as all the Hoadleys had a theatrical turn, I feel sure he and his family read it, with many a cheery laugh, in the old room at Chelsea. George II. certainly did so at Windsor, and saw it, too, at the Garden, and was so well pleased with his physician, the author, that he gratefully sent him the handsome fee of £100.

Garrick came off so well in his contest with Quin, that he probably had no fears of trying the fall to which he was challenged, with Barry. For this struggle Spranger Barry passed over to Drury Lane, to wrestle with David on his own ground. Drury may be called peculiarly his, for, by purchasing a share in the patent, he now commenced that career of management which lasted during his theatrical life, and the brilliancy of which was spoken of in every part of the world where an interest was felt in the intellectual enjoyments of the people.

The Drury Lane season of 1747–48 found Garrick joint-patentee with Lacy; Garrick directing the stage without interference, and receiving between six and seven hundred a year, as an actor, exclusive of his profits as part-proprietor. Garrick's company included Barry, Macklin, Delane, Havard, Mills, Yates, Barrington, Sparks, Lowe; and Mrs. Pritchard, Mrs.

Cibber, Mrs. Woffington, Mrs. Clive, and other bright but lesser stars.

In this season the chief attractions were Macklin's Shylock, Barry's Hamlet, Othello, and Pierre; and in less degree, his Bajazet, Henry V., and Orestes. Garrick drew full houses by Archer and Abel Drugger, Lear and Richard, Sir John Brute and Plume, Hamlet and Macbeth; but the greatest attraction of all was when Garrick and Barry played together, as Chamont and Castalio ("Orphan") Hastings and Dumont ("Jane Shore"), Lothario and Horatio ("Fair Penitent"), and Jaffier and Pierre. Against such attractions as were here presented, with the addition of Mrs. Woffington as Sir Harry Wildair, and Mrs. Clive, in all that was light, airy, impertinent, and tuneful—Covent Garden was more than usually weak. The latter, however, depended on the "Beggar's Opera," on Ryan and Delane,[1] the younger Cibber, the Giffards, and especially Mrs. Horton; Woodward was in Ireland. Quin had withdrawn to Bath. Garrick's triumphs had soured him. He desired to be asked back, but Rich would not humour him. The one wrote, "I am at Bath; yours, James Quin:" and the other answered, "Stay there and be d——d; yours, John Rich." The old actor returned, however, to play Othello, without fee, on occasion of a "charity benefit." Drury Lane alone produced a new piece, with new characters for Garrick and Barry, namely, Moore's "Foundling," in which Gar-

[1] Delane was not at Covent Garden. He did not leave Drury Lane till next season.

rick played Young Belmont with great *éclat;* Barry, Sir Charles Raymond, with dignity and tenderness, and Macklin, a knavish fop, Faddle, with wonderful power.

Moore, like Gay, had originally served in a draper's shop, and like Gay, wrote "Fables,"—"for the female sex." His "Foundling" bears some resemblance to the "Conscious Lovers;" but there is more art in the construction of the plot, and it is far purer than that piece which was written to inaugurate an era of purity. In the part of Faddle, he satirised a well-known individual, named Russell, who was the delight of ladies of *ton*, because of his good looks, crowning impudence, and his "imitations" of opera-singers. These qualities made him a guest, for whom ladies contended; and some displeasure arose, in aristocratic breasts, at Macklin's close mimicry of the man, —who, after all, on being arrested for a debt of £40, was left to pine, starve, and finally to die mad, in the Fleet prison. Such was the fate of this once favourite of fashion.

With the season of 1748–49, came increase of opposition between the two houses. At Drury Lane, Garrick and Barry played alternately Hamlet and Macbeth—the Hamlet of Garrick drawing by far the greater crowds. In the same pieces they played—Barry, Henry V., Garrick, the Chorus; Garrick, Horatio, Barry, Lothario; Garrick, Othello, Barry, Iago;[1] and Mahomet by Barry to the Demetrius of

[1] Dr. Doran has reversed the cast of these two plays. Garrick played Lothario and Iago; Barry, Horatio and Othello.

Garrick in Johnson's "Irene." Garrick also revived "A New Way to Pay Old Debts," in which King, springing from a coffee house, acted Allworth with great spirit and delicacy. It is strange that Garrick failed to perceive the golden opportunity he might have had as Sir Giles; he assigned the part to an inferior actor named Bridges, and preferred playing Fribble in "Miss in Her Teens." Garrick's greatest triumph this season was in playing Benedick to the Beatrice of Mrs. Pritchard. The town had not had so exquisite a delight for many a long day; and Garrick's happiness would have been supreme, but for the fact that Barry and Mrs. Cibber produced as great a sensation, though of another quality, in Romeo and Juliet. This last piece was not repeated,[1] to the great annoyance of Barry; and Garrick, at the close of the season married the pretty Violetti to the intense disgust of Mrs. Woffington, who now joined Rich.

At Covent Garden Quin, Delane, Ryan, Mrs. Woffington, Mrs. Horton, and Miss Bellamy, were the chief attractions. Quin played many parts which Garrick would not attempt. Of those played by both actors, Quin is said to have surpassed Garrick in Sir John Brute. But the most exciting event of this season was the abduction of Miss Bellamy, while playing Lady Fanciful to Quin's Brute. A gentleman named Metham begged to be allowed to speak with her in the hall of the theatre, and thence carried her off

[1] This is a most extraordinary statement. It was acted nineteen times.

and bore her away, little loth, I think, in his carriage. Quin explained the matter to the audience, who enjoyed it as a good thing done and a pleasant thing to hear of.

While the houses were thus contending, Foote was filling the little theatre in the Haymarket with an entertainment of his own; but there were authors of a higher class offering more intellectual pieces to the town. Fourteen years before, when Samuel Johnson was keeping school near Lichfield, he wrote his tragedy "Irene," which, in its rough state, he brought to London, when he and Garrick came up together in search of fortune. With poet, as with actor, the aspects of life had improved; but most with the latter. Johnson, now about forty, had been long known for his *London*, and had at this time put the finishing touches to his *Vanity of Human Wishes*. Garrick produced his friend's tragedy, and Johnson was present on the first night in gala dress, but not to be crowned, as Voltaire was, when the lively old Frenchman attended the representation of *his* "Irene." For nine nights, yielding the poet three benefits—Garrick, Demetrius; Barry, Mahomet; and Mrs. Cibber and Mrs. Pritchard as Aspasia and Irene, exerted themselves—with indifferent success. There is no local colour in this Turkish piece; the language and sentiment are elevated, but they are never oriental in form or spirit. The unities are strictly preserved, but not nature; and therewith the piece was set aside, and Johnson never tried the drama again.

In this season, too, kindly, over-speculating, fanci-

ful Aaron Hill, brought his efforts to a close, with " Merope ; "—and creditably, although he challenged comparison with Corneille, and in some things was allowed to have stood it with advantage. The piece was successful, but the author did not live to profit by it.[1] His family were weeping for his death, while audiences were shedding tears at the acting of Garrick, Dorilas ; and Mrs. Pritchard, Merope. Not only did this tragedy long hold the stage, but the subject of a mother suffering because of a lost son, was so agreeable, it would seem, that Browne, Whitehead, and Home, adopted it in " Barbarossa," " Creusa," and " Douglas."

Covent Garden, too, had its classical tragedy, in " Coriolanus," brought forward by Quin, after his friend Thomson's death. Quin played the hero of Thomson's play ; Ryan, Tullius ; Delane, Galesus ; Mrs. Woffington, Veturia ; and Miss Bellamy, Volumnia. This tragedy is worth reading, if it be only to see how very civil and colloquial the hot leader of the Volsci could be made by the Scottish poet in Kew Lane. In Shakspeare's tragedy, we have the annals of a life put into action. In Thomson's, as in Laharpe's " Coriolan," we have a single incident diluted through five acts ;—the secession from Rome, and its consequences, forming the staple of a play which ends with a tag of trotting rhymes, which are as natural, and not half so amusing, as if the grave speaker of them had danced a hornpipe in his *cothurni*.

[1] He lived for nearly a year. " Merope " was produced April 1749 : Hill died February 1750.

In 1749–50, symptoms were discernible of a break up in the Drury Lane company. Mrs. Cibber, at odds with Garrick, withdrew; and Barry, not allowed to play Romeo, was often indisposed to act in other plays. So it was said: but he publicly protested against any feigned indisposition. He repeated many of his old parts with Garrick, and created Publius Horatius to Garrick's Horatius, in Whitehead's "Roman Father." At Covent Garden, Delane exerted his dying efforts fruitlessly against Barry; and Woffington opposed Woodward in Sir Harry Wildair.

The above tragedy, by the son of a Cambridge baker, and one of Clare Hall's most honoured Fellows, was not the only novelty produced at Drury;—whither William Shirley brought from Portugal, where he had written it in his leisure hours, his "Edward, the Black Prince." Garrick played Edward; Barry, Ribemont; and Mrs. Ward, Marianne. It will suffice, as a sample of Shirley's insight into the Prince's character, to say, that he makes Edward, for love of Marianne, desert to the French side! A more absurd violation of history was never perpetrated by poet.[1] In the way of novelty, excepting pantomimic trifles, Covent Garden offered no sign.

The latter house made no acquisitions such as Drury found in King and in Palmer. Dyer, however, proved a useful actor, beginning his career with Tom

[1] It is a character named Arnold who joins the French for love of Marianne. Dr. Doran has misread a somewhat obscure sentence in Genest's description of the plot.

Errand, and bringing with him his wife, the daughter of Mrs. Christopher Bullock, the daughter of Wilks. On the other hand, the Garden lost Delane, whose first appearance at Goodman's Fields, in 1730,[1] was temporarily menacing to the supremacy of Quin, as Garrick's was permanently so, some years later. He was a graceful and clever actor, but there was only one character of note of which he was the original representative—Mahomet.

With this season also departed the actress whom Wilks and Booth looked upon as the legitimate successor of Mrs. Oldfield, namely, Mrs. Horton. Steele highly praised her for her acting Lady Brumpton in his "Funeral." Long after youth was passed she retained a luxuriant beauty, which was the envy of less richly endowed ladies. She loved homage rendered to her charms, and was grateful for it, however humble he who paid it. In her best days all young London was sighing at her feet, and in the meridian of her sunny time she invited adoration by the most exquisite coquetry. About this time her powers began so to decay that Rich only estimated her worth at £4 per week. Between Mrs. Woffington and Mrs. Pritchard she suffered shipwreck. Mrs. Horton was an artificial actress, the other two were of an opposite quality; Mrs. Pritchard especially captivated the public by her natural and intelligible style of speaking. Davies says,—Mrs. Horton had a small annuity, and that Garrick and Lacy added to it by giving her a "part of a benefit." She had, however, other resources.

[1] 1731.

When Lord Orford patronised Lord Luxborough, eldest son of Knight, of South Sea Company notoriety, people could not account for it, but Horace Walpole could. "Lord Luxborough," he writes to Mann, "keeps Mrs. Horton the player; *we* (Orford) keep Miss Norsa, the player. Rich, the harlequin, is an intimate of all; and to cement the harlequinity, somebody's brother (excuse me if I am not perfect in such genealogy) is to marry the Jewess's sister." In this wise did the stage in those days act upon politics. The Miss Norsa, above-named, had been a singer, of some repute, and Orford, then Lord Walpole, had taken her off the stage with the concurrence of her parents, to whom he gave a bond by which he engaged to marry her as soon as his wife should die! His wife, however, happily outlived him. Horace Walpole, writing to Mann from Houghton, in 1743, says:—"Lord Walpole has taken a dozen pictures to Stanno, a small house, about four miles from hence, where he lives with my Lady Walpole's vicegerent. You may imagine that her deputies are no fitter than she is to come where there is a modest, unmarried girl." This girl was Maria Walpole, daughter of Sir Robert, and subsequently the wife of Colonel Churchill, one of Mrs. Oldfield's sons.

Six-and-thirty years had Mrs. Horton been on the stage (1714-1750), and in all that time she was the original representative of only one character, Mariana, in the "Miser."

And now we come to the famous Romeo and Juliet

season, that of 1750-51, in which Garrick and Barry were the rival Romeos, Miss Bellamy and Mrs. Cibber the opposing Juliets. Barry, by passing to Covent Garden, was enabled to play with Quin, in "Othello," the "Orphan," "Jane Shore," "Henry V.," "Julius Cæsar," "Distressed Mother," "Fair Penitent," "Tamerlane," and "King John." In these, Barry's Faulconbridge was alone a failure, and Quin held his own so well that his terms for the season were £1000, the largest sum ever yet received by English actor; but his Richard was as little a success as Barry's Faulconbridge. Garrick, Mrs. Pritchard, and Miss Bellamy appeared together in "Zara;" at the other house,[1] Barry, Mrs. Cibber, and Mrs. Woffington, in the "Conscious Lovers." Mrs. Cibber, as Indiana, made a great point by her delivery of such simple words as these: "Sir, if you will pay the money to a servant, it will do as well!" Barry and Mrs. Woffington in Lord and Lady Townley, and Quin and Mrs. Woffington in "Macbeth," were among the attractions of Covent Garden, added to which was Rich's Harlequin; but for that also Garrick found a rival in Woodward, who played the motley hero as he played everything, with care and effect.

But all these matters were as nothing when compared with the rival Romeos and Juliets. They appeared on the same night, at their respective houses, the 28th of September, 1750. At Covent Garden,

[1] Probably the "Mourning Bride"—(Zara by Mrs. Pritchard)—is meant. "Zara" does not seem to have been played.

the public had Romeo, Barry; Mercutio, Macklin; Juliet, Mrs. Cibber. At Drury, Romeo, Garrick; Mercutio, Woodward; Juliet, Miss Bellamy. On the first night Barry spoke a poor prologue, in which it was insinuated that the arrogance and selfishness of Garrick had driven him and Mrs. Cibber from Covent Garden. Garrick, ready to repel assault, answered in a lively, good-natured epilogue, delivered saucily by Mrs. Clive.

It was considered a wonderful circumstance that this play ran for *twelve* nights successively; Garrick played it thirteen, to show that he was not beaten from the field! At that period the Londoners, who were constant playgoers, demanded a frequent change of performance; and the few country folk then in town felt aggrieved that one play should keep the stage during the whole fortnight they were in London. Thence the well-known epigram:—

"'Well, what's to-night?' says angry Ned,
As up from bed he rouses;
'Romeo again!' he shakes his head:
'A plague on both your houses!'"

Contemporary journals, indeed, affirm that the audiences grew thin towards the end of the fortnight, but this seems doubtful, as Barry's twenty-third representation, in the course of the season, was given expressly on account of the great number of persons who were unable to obtain admission to his twenty-second performance.

There is no doubt that Mrs. Cibber had the handsomer, more silver-tongued, and tender lover. She

seemed to listen to him in a sort of modest ecstasy; while Miss Bellamy, eager love in her eyes, rapture in her heart, and amorous impatience in every expression, was ready to fling herself into Romeo's arms. In Barry's Romeo, the critics laud his harmony of feature, his melting eyes, and his unequalled plaintiveness of voice. In the garden scenes of the second and fourth acts, and in the first part of the scene in the tomb, were Barry's most effective points. Garrick's great scenes were with the Friar and the Apothecary. Miss Bellamy declared that in the scene with the Friar alone was Garrick superior to Barry; Macklin swore that Barry excelled his rival in every scene.

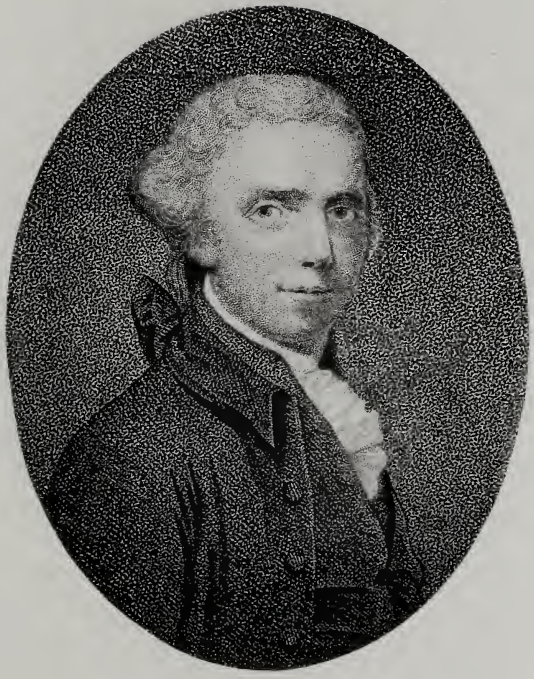
The Juliets, too, divided the public judgment. Some were taken by the amorous rapture, the loveliness, and the natural style of Bellamy; others were moved by the grander beauty, the force, and the tragic expression of distress and despair which distinguished Mrs. Cibber. Perhaps, after all, the truest idea of the two Romeos may be gathered from the remark of a lady who did not pretend to be a critic, and who was guided by her feelings. "Had I been Juliet," she said, "to Garrick's Romeo,—so ardent and impassioned was he, I should have expected that he would have *come up* to me in the balcony; but had I been Juliet to Barry's Romeo, so tender, so eloquent, and so seductive was he, I should certainly have *gone down* to him!"

Respectively, Barry acted Romeo twenty-three, Garrick nineteen times this season,—a season of

which there is nothing more to be said, save that Garrick created the part of Gil Blas, in Moore's comedy of that name, and that he produced Mallet's version of "Alfred"—playing the king.

At this time, the poets were not inspired, or managers could dispense with them, so attractive were the old actors in old pieces, with new actors—Shuter, Palmer, and Miss Macklin—aiding them. Thus, in the season 1751–52, Covent Garden, save in a burletta called the "Oracle," relied on its stock-pieces; and Drury only produced Foote's farce, "Taste," in which Worsdale, the painter, who kept, starved, beat, and lived upon Laetitia Pilkington, played Lady Pentweazle, with humorous effect;—and "Eugenia," a tragedy, by the Rev. Dr. Francis, the father of Sir Philip, in which there was the coarseness of sentiment, but none of the beauty of language or tenderness of feeling of Otway. Yet it was approved by Chesterfield, who sneered at the pit and gallery as "common people who must have objects that strike the senses, and are only moved by the sufferings they see, and even then must be dyed with the blood." But this is untrue, although my lord said it, for Johnson's "Irene" failed because of the strangling of the heroine in presence of the audience; and it was only tolerated, during its brief run, after the killing was described and not performed.

I have said that the managers relied on the actors and not on the poets. In return, the actors exerted themselves to the very utmost. Mrs. Cibber was as much stirred by Miss Bellamy as Barry by Garrick,



and the reverse. In "Jane Shore," for instance, Mrs. Cibber, who played Alicia to the Jane of pretty and modest Miss Macklin, seemed, on the 25th of October especially, to be inspired "with something more than mortal." Though Alicia had always been looked on as one of her very best characters, yet this night's performance she never equalled, before nor since.

In this season, Barry acted Romeo twelve, Garrick only six times; but the latter introduced a new opposition to his formidable rival, in the persons of Mossop and Ross, both from Ireland. Mossop first appeared in Richard, which he repeated seven times with great applause. His Zanga was still more successful; indeed, he has never been excelled in that character. Six times he played Horatio to Garrick's Lothario, and charmed the town more frequently by his grand Theseus to Mrs. Pritchard's Phædra. In Macbeth, Othello, Wolsey, and Orestes, he also displayed great powers. Ross, a gentlemanlike actor, made his *debût* in Young Bevil, by Garrick's advice, and acted Lord Townley, Altamont, and Castalio,—the latter to Garrick's Chamont, with great effect. Garrick, no doubt, would have reluctantly seen himself eclipsed by either of those players; but because inferior actors sought to flatter him by calling Mossop a ranter, and Ross a sniveller, and epigrammatists declared indifference to both, it is not conclusive that the flattery pleased or the sneer delighted him. Garrick had his own peculiar triumphs. His Kitely, to Woodward's Bobadil, Yates's Brainworm, Shuter's

Master Stephen, Ross's Young Knowell, and Palmer's Wellbred, gave new life to Ben Johnson's comedy of character. Thenceforward was associated the name of Captain Bobadil with that of the scholar from Merchant Tailors'—Harry Woodward.

But this has brought us into a new half-century, Let us pause and look back at the audiences of that which has gone by.

Mrs. Yates as Lady Macbeth.

WOODWARD IN "EVERY MAN IN HIS HUMOUR."

CHAPTER IX.

THE AUDIENCES OF 1700–1750.

Mr. Isaac Bickerstaffe has laid it down as a rule that it is the duty of every person in a theatrical audience to show his "attention, understanding, and virtue." To the insuperable difficulty of the task may, perhaps, be attributed the carelessness of audiences on this point. How is a man, for instance, to demonstrate his virtue in the public assembly? Steele answers the query—by showing a regard for it when exhibited on the stage. "I would undertake," he says, "to find out all the persons of sense and breeding by the effect of a single sentence, and

to distinguish a gentleman as much by his laugh as his bow. When we see the footman and his lord diverted by the same jest, it very much turns to the diminution of the one or the honour of the other. But," he adds, "though a man's quality may appear in his understanding and taste, the regard to virtue ought to be the same in all ranks and conditions of men, however they make a profession of it under the names of honour, religion, or morality."

Steele was gratified by an audience who sympathised with the distress of an honest but unlucky pair of lovers. He thinks that the Roman audience which broke into an ecstasy of applause at the abnegation of self displayed in the friendship of Pylades and Orestes, showed qualities which justly made of the Roman people the leaders of mankind. As if appreciation of the semblance of good were the same thing as the exercise of it. The same people applauded as lustily when they saw the life-blood spilt of the vanquished gladiator.

Again, he discovers a surpassing excellence in an Athenian audience,—famed of old for applauding the virtues which the Lacedemonians practised. That audience was roused to the utmost fury by the speech of a man who professed to value wealth far above good name, family, or natural affection. The uproar was so great that the author was compelled to come forward and ask the forbearance of the house till the last act of the piece, in which he promised that this wretched fellow would be brought to condign punish-

ment. Mr. Bickerstaffe very much questions whether modern audiences would be moved to such a laudable horror. It would be very undesirable that they should: or that a person should swing out of the house in disgust, as Socrates did when he attended the first representation of a tragedy by his friend Euripides,—and was excited to anger by a remark of Hippolitus, to the effect that he had "taken an oath with his tongue but not with his heart." The maxim was indefensible, but the action of the play required it; and Socrates had been truer to his friend had he remained till the *dénoûment*, and not have hurried away while that friend's play was being applauded.

On the duties of audiences, Mr. Bickerstaffe is a little loose, but we may readily acquiesce in one of his sentiments. "When we see anything divert an audience, either in tragedy or comedy, that strikes at the duties of civil life, or exposes what the best men in all ages have looked upon as sacred and inviolable, it is the certain sign of a profligate race of men, who are fallen from the virtue of their forefathers, and will be contemptible in the eyes of their posterity." This was said when audiences thought only of the quality of the actor, and troubled not themselves with that of the maxims uttered, unless these had some political tendency, or allusion to well-known popular circumstance. The *Tatler* lived before the time when the stories of Regulus and Virginia were turned into burlesque, and children received their first impressions of Alfred and of Tell through the caricature of extravaganza.

But there was much that was illegitimate in those legitimate days. If a play was not likely to attract, an audience was advertised, in order to draw one. The promised presence of royalty, naturally enough, helped to fill the house; but so would that of a leash of savages, or a quack doctoress. Of the latter class, there was the clever and impudent Mrs. Mapp, the bone-setter, who came into town daily from Epsom, in her own carriage, and set bones, or explained her principle in doing so, at the Grecian Coffee House. The Lincoln's Inn Field managers invited her to honour their house and the performance with her presence, and the astute old lady was well aware that her presence thus granted would be a profitable advertisement of herself. That presence I find announced at the above theatre on the 16th October, 1736, with that of Taylor, the oculist, at Lincoln's Inn Fields. The play was the "Husband's Relief," but the full house was owing to Mrs. Mapp being there. In honour of this "bone-setter," near whom also sat Ward, the worm doctor, a song was sung on the stage,—as the national anthem when a sovereign sanctions the doings of the evening. Of this chant I give the first and last verses:—

"Ye surgeons of London, who puzzle your pates,
To ride in your coaches and purchase estates,
Give over, for shame, for your pride has a fall,
And the doctress of Epsom has outdone you all.
Derry down.

* * * * *

"Dame Nature has giv'n her a doctor's degree,
She gets all the patients and pockets the fee;

So if you don't instantly prove her a cheat,
She'll loll in her chariot, while you walk the street.
Derry down!"

Let us now glance at the example set to audiences by greater folk than Mrs. Mapp.

George I. understood English better than he could speak it, and he could make ready application of passages to contemporary events connected with himself or others. Shakspeare's "Henry VIII." was frequently played before him, both at Hampton Court and at Drury Lane; and there was a speech in that play which never escaped his marked notice. It is that addressed by Wolsey to his secretary, Cromwell, after the King has ordered the Cardinal to write letters of indemnity, into every county where the payment of certain heavy taxes had been disputed. "A word with you," says the Cardinal:—

"Let there be letters writ to every shire,
Of the King's grace and pardon.—The grieved commons
Hardly conceive of me. Let it be noised,
That through *our* intercession, this revokement
And pardon comes.—I shall, anon, advise you
Further in the proceeding."

Cibber, who narrates the incident, states that "the solicitude of this spiritual minister in filching from his master the grace and merit of a good action, and dressing up himself in it, while himself had been author of the evil complained of, was so easy a stroke of his temporal conscience that it seemed to raise the King into something more than a smile whenever that play came before him. And I had a more distinct occasion to observe this effect, because my

proper stand on the stage, when I spoke the lines, required me to be near the box where the King usually sat. In a word, this play is so true a dramatic chronicle of an old English court, and where the character of Harry VIII. is so excellently drawn, even to a humorous likeness, that it may be no wonder why His Majesty's particular taste for it should have commanded it three several times in one winter."

So far Cibber; we hear from another source that on one occasion when the above lines were spoken, the King said to the Prince of Wales, who had not yet been expelled from Court, "You see, George, what you have one day to expect."

When George I., wishing to patronise the English actors, in 1718, ordered the great hall at Hampton Court to be converted into a theatre, he desired that it might be ready by June, in order that the actors in their summer vacation might play before him three times a week. The official obstacles prevented the hall being ready before September, when the actors had commenced their London season, and were, therefore, enabled to play before the King only seven times. The performances were under the direction of Steele, whose political services had been poorly recompensed by granting him certain theatrical privileges. The troop commenced on the 23rd of the month with "Hamlet;" they subsequently played "Sir Courtly Nice," the "Constant Couple," "Love for Money," "Volpone," and "Rule a Wife and Have a Wife." The King could not have been an indifferent scholar

if he could readily apply passages, and quickly comprehend others, in plays like these; or could follow Cibber in Sir Courtly, laugh at the jokes of Pinkethman in Crack, feel the heartiness of Miller, in Hothead, be interested in the Testimony of Johnson, sympathetic with the Surly of Thurmond, enjoy the periods of Booth in Farewell, or the aristocratic spirit of Mills in Lord Bellguard. The ladies, too, in some of the plays acted before him,—Leonora, by Mrs. Porter, and Violante, by Mrs. Younger,—had also some phrases to utter, which might well puzzle one not to the matter born. But George I. must have comprehended all, for he so thoroughly enjoyed all, that Steele told Lord Sunderland, the grandson of Sacharissa, and the son-in-law of Marlborough, that the King liked the entertainment "so terribly well, my lord, that I was afraid I should have lost all my actors; for I was not sure the King would not keep them to fill the place at Court, which he saw them so fit for in the play."

In the old days, a play acted before the sovereign at Whitehall, cost that sovereign but the poor fee of £20, the actors playing at their own house, in the afternoon, previous to having the honour of acting before the Court at night. To the performers at Hampton Court their ordinary day's wage was given, with their travelling expenses, for which they held themselves ready to act there at a day's warning. The Lord Chamberlain found the wax-lights, and furnished the "household music," while the players' wardrobe and "traps" generally were conveyed from

old Drury down to Hampton in a "*Chaise Marine*" at his Majesty's expense. The cost of the seven plays amounted to £350; but King George generously threw in a couple of hundred more, as a guerdon to the managers, who had professed that the honour of toiling to afford his Majesty pleasure was sufficient recompense in itself! The King did not believe a word of it; and the Duke of Newcastle, then Lord Chamberlain (and subsequently the original of Foote's Matthew Mug, in the "Mayor of Garratt"), paid the money into the hands of the delighted Cibber, who was astounded at the Chamberlain's modesty, which kept him from arrogating to himself, like Cardinal Wolsey, the merit which belonged to his royal master.

How things went between audience and actors in the Hampton Court theatre is admirably told by Cibber himself:—"A play presented at Court, or acted on a public stage," he says, "seem to their different authors a different entertainment. In the common theatre the guests are at home, where the politer forms of good breeding are not so nicely regarded. Every one there falls to, and likes or finds fault, according to his natural taste or appetite. At Court, where the Prince gives the treat and honours the table with his own presence, the audience is under the restraint of a circle where laughter or applause raised higher than a whisper would be stared at. At a public play they are both let loose, even till the actor is sometimes pleased with his not being able to be heard for the clamour of them. But this cold-

ness, or decency of attention at Court, I observed, had but a melancholy effect upon the impatient vanity of some of our actors, who seemed inconsolable when their flashy endeavours to please had passed unheeded. Their not considering where they were quite disconcerted them, nor could they recover their spirits till, from the lowest rank of the audience, some gaping *Joan* or *John*, in the fulness of their hearts, roared out their approbation."

These little ebullitions appear to have amused the grave King, for Cibber hints that they raised a smile on the royal countenance, and he suggests that such a fact was entirely natural and reasonable. He adds, "that an audience may be as well too much reserved as too profuse of their applause. For though it is possible a Betterton would not have been discouraged from throwing out an excellence, or elated into an error, by his auditors being too little or too much pleased; yet as actors of his judgment are rarities, those of less judgment may sink into a flatness in their performance for want of that applause which, from the generality of judges, they might, perhaps, have some pretence to; and the auditor, when not seeming to feel what ought to affect him, may rob himself of something more that he might have had, by giving the actor his due, who measures out his power to please, according to the value he sets upon the hearer's taste or capacity; but, however, as we were not here itinerant adventurers, and had properly but one royal auditor to please, after that

honour was attained to, the rest of our ambition had little to look after."

And now what of this George's successor as an "auditor?"

Among the unmerited censures which have been flung at Charles II., the most conspicuous and the least reasonable is that the grossness of the dramas produced in his days was owing to his bad taste exhibited in his fondness for French comedy. Had the poets of that period imitated that comedy, they would not have offended as they did, for, taken altogether, French comedy was remarkable for its freedom from utter, abounding, and continual coarseness. I think that George II. was more blameworthy than his predecessor Charles, for he encouraged the representation of immoral dramas, and commanded the restoration of scenes which actors had begun to deem too indecent for acting or expression. For didactic plays the monarch had no stomach; but he savoured Ravenscroft's beastly comedies—the very worst of them did he the most delight in, and helped to keep them on the stage when actors and audiences were alike disgusted with them. This perverted taste was strong upon him from the first. When Prince of Wales, he witnessed the acting of "Venice Preserved," but, discovering subsequently, on reading the old edition of the play, there were scenes in it which are flattered by merely being designated as "filthy," he sent for the "master" of one of the houses, and commanded that the omitted scenes should be restored. They are those which chiefly lie between Aquilia and An-

tonio, characters which never take part in modern representations of Otway's tragedy. The former part was given to Mrs. Horton, who, though she was something of the quality of the creature she represented, was not only young and beautiful, but was draped in a certain mantle of modesty which heightened the charms of her youth and her beauty; and she must have had a painful task, less than the younger Pinkethman had who played Antonio, in thus gratifying the low predilections of the graceless Prince, who then gave *ton* to audiences.

George II., when Prince of Wales, found Bartholomew Fair as much to his taste as the theatres. In 1725, he, and a gay posse of companions, went down the Thames, in barges, to Blackfriars, and thence to the fair. At the conclusion of the fun for the night, they entered the old King's Arms Inn, joyously supped there, and got back to St. James's by four o'clock in the morning. Some years later, Prince Frederick, George II.'s son, who valued the stage in much the same measure as his father did, also visited the fair by night. He went amid a little army of yeomen of the guard, and under a blaze of torches, and cries of "make way there for the prince," from a mob who were delighted to see among them the heir apparent, in a bright ruby-coloured frock coat, thickly laced with gold. There was a gallant company, too, of gentlemen, all coated and laced, and besworded like the prince; but the finest and fussiest, and happiest personage there, was the important little man who marshalled the prince the way that he

should go, and ushered him to and from the booths, where short solemn tragedies were played, with a disjointed farce between the acts. This important individual was Mr. Manager Rich, and he was as happy at this night's doings, as if he had gained something more substantial by them than empty honour.

On the 3d of May 1736,[1] the audience at Drury Lane, with the Prince of Wales and his bride among them, witnessed some unexpected addition to the entertainment promised them. The footmen chose that night for an attempt to recover their old and abused privilege of occupying the upper gallery, *gratis*. One body of them entered the gallery by force, a second fought their way through the stage-door to dictate terms to the manager, and an active corps in plush kept the house in alarm by their shouts for a redress of grievances. Amid the fighting that ensued the terrified part of the audience dispersed. Colonel de Veil, with the "authorities," came to read the Riot Act, but no respect was paid either to dignitary or document, whereupon a battle-royal followed, in which plush was ingloriously defeated, with a loss of eighteen finely-liveried and thickly-calved combatants, who, battered, bruised, and bleeding, were clapped into Newgate for safe keeping.

In the latter part of the life of George II., he took advantage of his position to make loud remarks on the performances at which he was present. One

[1] Should be 5th of May 1737.

night, at Drury Lane, he commanded Farquhar's "Beaux' Stratagem" and Fielding's "Intriguing Chambermaid." He was amused with the Foigard of Yates, and the Cherry of Miss Minors. In the second piece, Kitty Clive played her original part of Lettice—a part in which she had delighted the town, which could then be delighted by such parts, for seventeen years. Walpole, writing of this incident to Mann, says: "A certain king that, whatever airs you may give yourself you are not at all like, was last week at the play. The intriguing chambermaid in the farce says to the old gentleman: 'You are villainously old, you are sixty-six, you cannot have the impudence to think of living above two years.' The old gentleman in the stage-box turned about in a passion, and said, 'This is d——d stuff!' and the royal critic was energetically right."

On some occasions there were more kings in the house than he of England. Four were once there among the audience, and as far as their majesties were concerned, rather against their will. These poor majesties were American Indian chiefs, to whom the higher sounding title of "kings" was given by way of courtesy. The Irish actor, Bowen, had contrived to secure their presence at his benefit when "Macbeth" was performed, and a dense mob was gathered, not so much to hear Shakspeare as to see the "kings." The illustrious strangers were placed in the centre box, and as they were invisible to the occupants of the galleries an uproar ensued. Wilks blandly assured the rioters that the kings

were really present, as announced. The galleries did not care; they had paid their money, they said, to see them, and the kings they would have or there should be no play. After some negotiating and great tumult the managers placed four chairs upon the stage, to which the four Indian kings gravely descended from their box amid a chorus of "hurrahs!" from the late dissentients, with whose noisy enthusiasm the imperturbable gravity of the chiefs contrasted strangely. They listened seriously to the play, and with as much intelligence to the epilogue, which was specially addressed to them, and in which they were told that as Sheba's queen once went to adore Solomon, so they had been "winged by her example" to seek protection on Britannia's shore. It then proceeded, with some abuse of grammar, thus:—

> "O princes, who have with amazement seen
> So good, so gracious, and so great a queen;
> Who from her royal mouth have heard your doom
> Secur'd against the threats of France and Rome;
> Awhile some moments on our scenes bestow;"

which was a singular request to make when the play was over!

One of the greatest honours ever rendered to a dramatist by royalty, was conferred by Queen Caroline, wife of George II., on Mottley. The poet was but a poet by courtesy; his two stilted tragedies were soon forgotten, and a better fate has not attended his other productions. What merit gained for him the favour of so great a queen was never known. Mottley's father was an active Jacobite; but the son

was a seeker of places, for which he obtained more promises than were realised. Yet for this obscure person, whose benefit night was announced as to take place soon after the Queen's Drawing Room had been held, that queen herself, in that very drawing room (the occasion being the Prince of Wales's birthday), sold Mottley's tickets, delivering them with her own royal hand to the purchasers, and condescending to receive gold for them in return. The money was handed over to that gravest of the Hanoverian officials, Colonel Schurtz, privy-purse to the prince, who presented the same to the highly-honoured, and, perhaps, much astonished poet, with a handsome guerdon added to it by the prince himself.

It is due to the audiences at Oxford, where the actors played in their brief season twice a day, that it should be said, that the taste of the University was superior to that of the metropolis. Whatever modern dramatists might assert with respect to Shakspeare, and however the "more politely written comedies" might be acceptable to a licentious London pit, Oxford asserted the superiority of Shakspeare and Ben Jonson, "for whose masterly scenes," says Cibber, "they seemed to have as implicit a reverence as, formerly, for the ethics of Aristotle." The flash, and tinsel, and even the sterling metal mixed up with the dross of the modern illustrative comedy, had no attractions for an Oxford audience. Of modern tragedy they only welcomed "Cato;" but that was written by an Oxford man, and after the classic model, and to see this, the play

goers clustered round the doors at noon, and the death of Cato triumphed over the injuries of Cæsar everywhere.

On the taste of English audiences generally, Dryden remarks, in his *Essay on Dramatic Poesy*, that, "as we who are a more sullen people come to be diverted at our plays, so the French, who are of an airy and gay temper, come hither to make themselves more serious. And this I conceive to be why comedies are more pleasing to us and tragedies to them." This appears to me as false as his assertion that rhymed plays were in their nature and fashion peculiarly English! A few years later the "polite taste" of audiences was censured freely by Edmund Curll, who was very irate that "nothing would go down but ballad-opera and Mr. Lun's buffoonery;" but this taste was attributed by him to an imperfect education. "As for breeding," that delicate gentleman remarks, "our brewers are now arrived at such a height of *finesse* and *elegance*, that their children are sent into France for education. But for this, as a lord mayor himself said, there ought to be some grains of allowance."

Cibber relates an incident illustrative of the ferocity of enamoured and rejected beaux among the audience. One of these, in the year 1717, had incurred the strongly-expressed contempt of a young actress, whom Colley does not further designate, for some insulting language addressed to her as she was seated in a box. This fellow took his revenge by outraging the lady, on the stage, and, when she ap-

peared, he interrupted her performance "with such loud and various notes of mockery, as other young Men of honour in the same place have sometimes made themselves undauntedly merry with." This disappointed beau, however, went further, and threw at the lady "such trash as no person can be supposed to carry about him, unless to use on so particular an occasion." A champion of the insulted actress called her assailant "a fool, or a bully," whereupon the latter challenged him to Hyde Park, and proved himself craven to boot, by asking for his life. "Whether he mended it or not," says Cibber, "I have not yet heard; but his antagonist, a few years after, died in one of the principal posts of the Government."

The critics were not more tender to a new play, particularly when provoked by sarcasms against their judgment in the prologue, than the above offender was to a well-conducted actress. "They come to a new play," Cibber tells us, "like hounds to a carcase, and are all in a full cry, sometimes for an hour together, before the curtain rises to throw it amongst them. Sure, those gentlemen cannot but allow that a play, condemned after a fair hearing, falls with thrice the ignominy, as when it is refused that common justice." This was a new race of critics, unknown to earlier times, and their savageness had the effect of deterring gentlemen from writing plays. "They seem to me," says Colley, "like the lion whelps in the Tower, who are so boisterously gamesome at their meals that they dash down the bowls of milk brought for their own breakfasts."

We meet with one instance of forbearance being asked from the critics, not on the ground that the piece had merit, but that, as a prince of the blood was in the house, he should be allowed to listen to the nonsense undisturbed. The piece was Cibber's pastoral opera, "Love's Riddle," produced at Drury Lane, in January 1729. The public were offended at the recent prohibition of the second part of the "Beggar's Opera," Cibber was looked upon as having procured the prohibition for the sake of his own piece, and a cabal of pit rioters hooted the play, and were only momentarily silent while Miss Raftor was singing, whose voice had well nigh saved this operatic drama. On the second night, which was even more riotous than the first, Frederick, Prince of Wales, was present, and it was in order that he might be decently bored, and not deprived of what he had never seen, the fun of a playhouse riot, that Cibber addressed the pit, and undertook that the piece should be withdrawn after that night, if they would only remember in whose presence they were, and allow the drama to be quietly played out. With this understanding the rioters withdrew, the piece went dully on, and, at the close of it, a lord in waiting was sent behind the scenes to compliment Cibber and to express the Prince's approval of his conduct on that night.

The pit was always the great court of appeal, and on one occasion Cibber showed much courage and good sense, and a due appreciation of his calling as an actor. At the theatre in Dorset Gardens, where

the Drury Lane Company occasionally played, and on an evening when he was announced for one of his best parts, a set of rope-dancers were advertised as about to make their first appearance. Cibber's scorn was roused by this companionship, and what he did may be best told in his own words. "I was hardy enough," he says, "to *go into the pit,* and acquainted the spectators near me that I hoped they would not think it a mark of my disrespect to them if I declined acting upon any stage that was brought to so low a disgrace as ours was like to be by that day's entertainment." In this he had the support of his fellow-actors, and the public approved; and the acrobats were dismissed by the reluctant manager.

The pit was at this period supreme and severe, and as the witlings used to make remarks on, or exchange them with, the more audacious beauties in the boxes, so now did they exercise a cruel humour in making sarcastic application of the words of a part to the actress who delivered them. By these they pointed out the flaws in her character, her deficiency in beauty, or her effrontery in assuming virtues which did not belong to her.

I do not find that any special evening was considered particularly "fashionable" till towards the close of Cibber's managerial career at Drury Lane, which, by good administration, had become so much in fashion, he says, "with the *politer part* of the town, that our house, every Saturday, seemed to be the appointed assembly of the first ladies of quality. Of this, too," he adds, "the *common* spectators were

so well apprised, that, for twenty years successively on that day, we scarcely ever failed of a crowded audience, for which occasion we particularly reserved our best plays, acted in the best manner we could give them."

From the Restoration till late in the reign of Queen Anne, those "politer" folks, as Cibber,—or the "quality," as Chesterfield would have called them, had been accustomed to arrogate to themselves the privilege not merely of going behind the scenes but crowding at the wings, and, at last, invading the stage itself, while the play was being acted. Through this mob the players had to elbow their way; and where all illusion was destroyed, difficult must have been the task, but marvellous the triumph, of those actors who could make grief appear sincere, and humour seem spontaneous and genuine. This mob was not a civil and attentive crowd, but a collection of impertinent persons, who buzzed and moved about, and changed salutations with the audience, or addressed the players—the chief of whom they must often have supremely exasperated. The "decency of a clear stage" was one of Cibber's great objects, and when his importunity and the decree of Queen Anne drove the erratic part of the audience back to their proper position in the house, a change for the better was effected, by which all parties were gainers. This decree was issued in January 1704, and it prohibited "the appearance of any of the public on the stage whatever might be their quality, the wearing of masks in any part of the

house, entering the house without previous due payment, and the acting of anything on the stage contrary to religion and good manners." Previously to the appearance of this decree, persons were employed to take down profane words uttered by the performers, who were thereupon prosecuted, and, on conviction, fined. The authors who penned the phrases, for omitting which the actor would have been mulcted, were neither molested nor censured.

Cibber contrasts French and English audiences to the disadvantage of the latter; but I think he is wrong in his conclusions. "At the tragedy of 'Zaire,'" he says, "while the celebrated Mdlle. Gossin was delivering a soliloquy, a gentleman was seized with a sudden fit of coughing, which gave the actress some surprise and interruption, and, his fit increasing, she was forced to stand silent so long that it drew the eyes of the uneasy audience upon him; when a French gentleman, leaning forward to him, asked him if this actress had given him any particular offence, that he took so public an occasion to resent it? The English gentleman, in the utmost surprise, assured him, so far from it, that he was a particular admirer of her performance; that his malady was his real misfortune, and that if he apprehended any return of it, he would rather quit his seat than disoblige either the actor or the audience." Colley adds, that he had seen this "publick decency" of the French theatre carried so far "that a gentleman in their *Second Loge*, or Middle Gallery, being observed to sit forward himself, while a lady sat

behind him, a loud number of voices called out to him from the pit—*Place à la Dame! Place à la Dame!* when the person so offending, either not apprehending the meaning of the clamour, or possibly being some John Trot, who feared no man alive, the noise was continued for several minutes; nor were the actors, though ready on the stage, suffered to begin the play till this unbred person was laughed out of his seat, and had placed the lady before him."

This, however, was but the mere arrogance of the pit, towards which, had the lady stood for a moment, with her back turned, the polite gentlemen there would have roared lustily, as under similar circumstances they do at the present time, "*Face au parterre!*" And as for the tenderness of the old French audiences for their actors, I have already given some taste of its quality, and have only to add here, that the French magistrates were once compelled to issue a decree wherein "Every person is prohibited from doing any violence in the Theatre de Bourgogne, in Paris, during the time any piece is performing, as likewise from *throwing stones*, dust, or anything which may put the audience into an uproar, or create any tumult."

The decree of 1704 for keeping the stage clear does not appear to have been universally observed, for, on the opening of the first theatre in Covent Garden, in December 1732, I find it announced that, on account of the great demand for places, the pit and boxes were laid together at 5*s.*, the galleries at 2*s.* and 1*s.*, and to prevent the stage from being

crowded, admission thereto was raised to half a guinea. In the former year, to appear at the theatre in a red coat and a laced hat, indicated a rural beau who was behind his time, and had not yet laid aside a fashion as old as the days of Great Nassau. Dress, however, was indispensable. Swift writes to Stella, on the 31st of August 1711, "Dilly and I walked to Kensington, to Lady Mountjoy, who invited us to dinner. He returned soon to go to the play, it being the last that will be acted for some time. He dresses himself like a beau, and no doubt makes a fine figure." No doubt that Dillon Ashe was dressed in his best that night, on which he went to Drury, and saw "Love's a Jest," with Pack in Sam Gaymood, and Mrs. Porter as Lady Single.

As the government procured the passing of the Licensing Act less for the sake of morality than to save administration from the shafts of satire, so the public took it unkindly of them, but unreasonably revenged themselves on innocent authors. No secret was made of the determination of playgoers to damn the first piece that should be stigmatised with the license of the Lord Chamberlain. That piece happened to be the "Nest of Plays," by Hildebrand Jacob, represented at Covent Garden, in January 1738, which was damned accordingly. But the public sense of wrong was not yet appeased. The "Parricide" subsequently was condemned, solely because it was a licensed piece. "That my enemies," says William Shirley, the author, "came resolved to execute before trial, may be gathered from their

behaviour ere the play began, for at five o'clock they engaged and overthrew the candles in the music-room, and called a council of war, whether they should attack the harpsichord or not; but to your good fortune," he adds, addressing Rich, "it was carried in the negative. Their expelling ladies from the pit, and sending for wine to drink, were likewise strong indications of their arbitrary and violent dispositions." It is to be observed, however, of a few condemned pieces of this period, that the authors rather abused their opportunity of ascribing their ill fortune solely to the unpopularity of the Licensing Act.

The ushering of ladies out of the pit was one of the formal indications that serious mischief was afoot. This was the first ceremony observed at Drury Lane in January 1740, when the riot took place consequent on the non-appearance of a French dancer, Madame Chateauneuf. When the ladies had been sent home, a noble marquis suggested, and warmly recommended, that it would be well and proper to set fire to the house! This atrocious proposal was considered but not adopted. The aristocratic rioters contented themselves with destroying the musical instruments, fittings, and costly adornments, sweeping down the panel partitions of the boxes, and finally pulling down the royal arms. The offence, however, was condoned, on the most noble marquis sending £100 to the manager, who submitted to defray the remainder of the cost of reparation rather than further provoke his excellent patrons.

The mixture of ferocity and gallantry in the audiences of these times was remarkable. When Miller, most unlucky of clergymen, produced his farce of the "Coffee-House," he caused the Temple to heave with indignation. Under the temple gate there was a coffee-house, kept by Mrs. Yarrow and her daughter, and as there was not only a similar pair in Miller's piece, but a woodcut on the title-page of the printed copy, which bore some likeness to the snug little place where Templars loved to congregate, those gentlemen took offence as at an insult levelled at their fair hostesses, and went down in a body to the theatre, whence they procured the expulsion of the piece. Nor did they ever suffer a subsequent play of Miller's to succeed. The Templars never forgave him his unintentional caricature of the buxom hostess, and Hebe her daughter, who presided over the aromatic cups dispensed by them beneath the Temple gates. In contests like these, where opposition was expected, it was no unusual thing for one or both parties to hire a body of professional "bruisers." The side which possessed the greatest number of these Bashi-Bazouks generally carried the day. When the town took sides, in 1743, in the quarrel between Garrick and Macklin, where the right was altogether with the former, Dr. Barrowby headed a phalanx of sturdy Macklinites; but Garrick, or Garrick's friends, sent against them a formidable band of thirty boxers, who went in, cracked skulls, cleared the pit, and established tranquillity!

It is curious to mark, at a time when audiences

bore with gross wit, and were accustomed, on slight provocation, to resort to acts of violence, how sensitive they were on other points. Poor Hughes, who died on the first night of the representation of his "Siege of Damascus," in 1720, was compelled to remodel the character of Phocyas, a Christian who turns Moslem, as the managers considered that the audience would not tolerate the sight of him after his apostasy. So Charles Killigrew, Master of the Revels, cut out the whole of the first act from Cibber's adaptation of "Richard III." on the ground that the Jacobite portion of the audience, in the distress of King Henry, would be painfully or angrily reminded of the sorrows of King James. After all, susceptible as audiences occasionally were, the sensibilities of the gallery remained untouched, or evidence of the fact was offered in an exaggerated form. When Dryden's Cleomenes, or Rowe's Jane Shore, used to complain of the hunger under which they suffered, it was the humour of the "gods" to fling bread down upon the stage by way of showing their sympathy, or their want of it.

"All the parts will be played to the best advantage, the whole of the company being now in town," was no unusual bait thrown out to win an audience. Sometimes the house would fill to see, on great occasions, the foremost folk in the land, fops and fine ladies occupying the amphitheatre erected on the stage, and the players acting between a double audience. What should we think now of an author taking a benefit, obtaining at it the presence of the

heir to the throne, and delivering an oration on the condition and merits of the royal family and the state of the nation as regarded foreign and domestic relations? Yet this is what Durfey did, to the delight and edification of his hearers, at Drury Lane, in 1715.

On other occasions plays were given "for the entertainment of the new Toasts and several Ladies of Quality," whereat crowds flocked to behold the pretty nymphs whose names consecrated the flowing bumpers of the beaux, and the married ladies who had enjoyed that honour in their earlier days.

> "The boxes still the brighter circles were;
> Triumphant toasts received their homage there."

At other times, there were less friendly and admiring gatherings; and epilogues laudatory of Eugene and Marlborough filled the house with friends and foes of those illustrious men, and furnished reasons for very unreasonable conflicts. A flourish of the pen, too, in the *Tatler* or *Spectator*, could send half the town to fight for vacant benches; and it was remarked that there was scarcely a comedian of merit who had not been recommended to the public in the former journal. But to see these, there often only thronged

> "Poets free o' th' house, and beaux who never pay."

These non-paying beaux were as troublesome to players as to audience. In vain were they warned off the stage, where, indeed, half-a-guinea could always find admission for them, even after the mana-

gers had decreed that the way should be barred, though Potosi itself were offered for a bribe. In 1721, half-a-dozen tipsy beaux, with one among them of the degree of an Earl, who was wont to be tipsy for a week together, raised a riot, to avenge an affront, in the theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields. His lordship crossed the stage, while Macbeth and his lady were upon it, to speak to a boon companion, who was lolling at the opposite wing. There, too, stood Rich, the manager, who told the peer that, after such an act of indecorum, he should never be admitted behind the scenes again. The Earl looked up, and, steadying himself, administered to Rich a smart slap on the face, which Rich returned with interest. Swords flashed forth in a minute from half-a-dozen scabbards, whose laced and lordly owners solemnly decreed that Rich must die. But Quin, and Ryan, and Walker, rushed to the rescue, with their own weapons naked in their hands. With aid of some other members of the company, they made front, charged the coxcombs, and drove them headlong out at the stage door and into the kennel. The beaux waxed wroth; but executing a great strategic movement, they stormed the front of the house, and rushing into the boxes, they cut and thrust right and left, broke the sconces, slashed the hangings, and were proceeding to do further mischief, — "fire the house!" was ever a favourite threat with these bullies—when doughty Quin, and a body of constables and watchmen, flung themselves on the rioters, and carried all they caught before the

magistrates, by whom they were committed for trial. Ultimately, the affair was compromised; but there is evidence that the actors were intimidated, inasmuch as they issued a declaration that they would "desist from acting till proper care be taken to prevent the like disorders for the future." The house was closed for nearly a week; and, to prevent such outrages in future, the angry King, who took an interest in theatrical matters, ordered that a guard should attend during the performances at either house. This was the origin of the attendance of soldiers,—a custom which ceased at the patent theatres only a few years since.[1]

In the sight of an exceedingly "free" people, the guard was an insult, which the mob, and not the beaux, resented. It was a popular pastime to pelt them, till the terrors of the Prison-Gate House terminated the folly. The mob, indeed, loved a riot quite as dearly as the "quality," and were especially ungallant to the aspiring young ladies on the stage. West's tragedy of "Hecuba" entirely failed at Drury Lane, in 1726, through the Vandalism of the galleries, who, as capricious as my lords below, hissed the "young actresses" from beginning to end; and yet those "young actresses" were Mrs. Cibber, and other "darlings" of the town.

Colley Cibber once pleaded the gracious presence of a prince in order to win propriety of conduct from an audience; at other times, the more gracious presence of a poet won respect. This was the case on

[1] It is occasionally revived.—*Doran MS.*

that hot night in June 1730,[1] when "George Barnwell" was first played at Drury Lane. The audience had supplied themselves with the old ballad on the subject of that famous apprentice lad,—intending to make ludicrous contrast between the story there and that in the tragedy; but Pope was present, serious and attentive, and the rough critics, taking their cue from him, followed his example; at least, they threw away their ballads, took out their handkerchiefs, and wept over the fate of the wicked lad, so admirably played by that prince of scamps, Theophilus Cibber. Such a warning did he hold out to evildoers, that influential people of quality and reflecting city merchants used occasionally, for years, to "command" the playing of this tragedy, as wholesome instruction for apprentices in particular, and a wicked young public, generally.

Among the influential part of the audience, may be numbered the ladies. It was at their particular request that the part of Bookish, in Fielding's "Old Man taught Wisdom," was omitted after the first night, on account of some rude sentiments, touching the superiority of man over woman,—or of Bookish over Lucy! Considering how women, and audiences generally, were roughly handled in prologues and epilogues, the deference otherwise paid to the latter seems singular. For instance: the company at the Haymarket, in 1735, announced that they would "continue to act on Tuesdays and Fridays, as long as they shall deserve the favour of the town."

[1] 1731.

The most exacting portion of the audience, however, was to be found in the footmen. From the earliest times, they had been famous for their "roaring;" and Dryden speaks of them as a nuisance, than which there was no greater, except "their unpaying masters." These masters had small chance of hearing the play, unless their lacqueys gave permission. The plan of opening the upper gallery to these fellows, *gratis*, in 1697, was an aggravation rather than a palliative of the evil; but the privilege, although at various times suspended, was not finally abolished till about 1780. As many as three hundred of the party-coloured tribe have been known to unite, armed, in support of the privilege which they invariably abused. Of authors present at the condemnation of their own pieces, and of the philosophy, or lack of it, with which they bore their calamity, I shall have to speak presently; but I am tempted to notice here, as illustrations of the audience side of the theatre, the appearance of dramatists in state, witnessing the triumphs of their pieces. When the "Conscious Lovers" was first played at Drury Lane, in 1722, Steele sat in what was called Burton's box, —an enclosed part in the centre of the first gallery, where places were kept at pit prices. From this lofty elevation, Steele enjoyed the success of a piece which respected decency throughout, and he awarded approval to all the actors concerned, except Griffin, who played Cimberton. Fielding laughed at this novel comedy, as being "as good as a sermon;" and later writers have ridiculed the author for preferring

to show what manners ought to be, rather than what they are; but Steele's play—a *leetle* dull though it be—was creditable to him, and a benefit to the stage.

Political application of passages in plays was frequently and eagerly made by the audiences of those days,—though Walpole records an incident of lack of observation in this respect, as well as of readiness. When his father, Sir Robert, was threatened with impeachment, in 1742, Horace ridiculed the want of frankness on the part of the ministry. "The minds of the people grow much more candid," he says; "at first, they made one of the actors at Drury Lane repeat some applicable lines at the end of 'Henry IV.;' but, last Monday, when his royal highness (the Prince of Wales) had purposely bespoken 'The Unhappy Favourite,' for Mrs. Porter's benefit, they never once applied the most glaring passages; as, where they read the indictment against *Robert, Earl of Essex*, &c. &c."

We have seen kings at the play in presence of their people; and poets were often there, receiving as warm welcome as kings. When Thomson's "Agamemnon" was first played, Pope was present, and he was received, we are told by Johnson, "with a general clap." This shows how familiar London audiences were with their great men, and that the same men must often have exhibited themselves to the same audiences;—the Londoners being then the great playgoers. On the same night, the author of the drama was himself seated, not near Pope, but in the centre of the gallery, surrounded by some friends.

There, as soon as Mrs. Cibber and Mrs. Furnival entered and spoke, he began to accompany them, by audible declamation, which his friends had some difficulty in checking. Johnson, when "Irene" was played, was more dignified and more calm. He sat forward in a conspicuous side box, solemnly dressed for the occasion, his wig new curled, a bright scarlet waistcoat—gold laced, purchased for the nonce,—and a tranquil, majestic look about him, which the pit frequently contemplated with approval. The poet was being judged by the people. But poet and people were there to heed the players; and let us now follow their example.

Mr. Macklin as Shylock.

QUIN AS CORIOLANUS.

CHAPTER X.

EXIT, JAMES QUIN.

The opposition between Garrick and Barry was well sustained during the season of 1752–53. The former had a forcible second and substitute in Mossop, and an attractive lady to woo in comedy, or slay in tragedy, in Miss (or Mrs.) Bellamy; but a more accomplished still in Mrs. Pritchard. At the Garden, Barry was at his very best in health and acting, and Mrs. Cibber in the full bloom of her beauty and powers. It was a pity that such a pair of lovers should be separated, "for no two persons were so calculated to assist each other by voice, manner, and real feeling,

as they were;" but, as Wilkinson records, "at the close of this season they separated, never to meet again on the same stage." Meanwhile, fashion patronised Garrick and Mrs. Pritchard, rather more lavishly than the rival pair.

Each had their especial triumphs in new pieces. Garrick and Mrs. Pritchard, in Moore's "Gamester," first played on the 7th February 1753 (Beverley, Garrick; Lewson, Mossop; Stukely, Davies; Mrs. Beverley, Mrs. Pritchard), and Barry and Mrs. Cibber in Jones's "Earl of Essex," produced at the Garden, February 21st. Admirable as Garrick was in Beverley, Mrs. Pritchard carried off the chief honours, so natural, so terribly real, and so apparently unconscious of the audience was she in her acting. She was quite "at home" in this prose tragedy; the severe lesson in which, however, after terrifying, began to displease hearers, who did not relish the caustic laid to their darling vice.

Let me also mention here Young's tragedy, the "Brothers," written thirty years before, previous to his ordination, amended by Lady Wortley Montagu, and now played in March 1753.

As soon as Young surrendered this piece to the players, for the benefit of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, he was immersed in the very thickest of theatrical squabbles, to the disgrace of his clerical profession. George Anne Bellamy, that capricious beauty on whom the delighted town showered fortune, who rode one day in gilded chariots, and the next was lying on the lowest of the steps at West-

minster Bridge, wrapped in misery, and contemplating suicide; the irresistible Bellamy was then the idol of the world of fashion, and Young readily acceded to her request that she might read "The Brothers" to the players. The request rendered Garrick furious, although it was grounded on the young lady's personal knowledge of the author. The green-room was in an uproar. Roscius claimed the principal part for Mrs. Pritchard; and when George Anne poutingly offered to surrender the character assigned her by the doctor, Young vehemently opposed it with an emphatic, "No, no!" Mrs. Bellamy accordingly read the piece, and assumed the liberty of criticising it. She expressly objected to the line, "I will speak to you in thunder," as not being in a concatenation with the delicacy of the fine lady who utters it. The reverend author protested that it was the most forcible line in the piece; but Mrs. Bellamy thought it would be more so if it were improved by the introduction of "lightning" as well as thunder.

The good doctor was something nettled at the lady's wit; and he declared that "The Brothers" was the best piece he had ever written. "I am afraid, doctor," rejoined the lady, pertly, "that you will do with me as the Archbishop of Toledo did with Gil Blas on a similar occasion. But I cannot help reminding you of a tragedy called the 'Revenge!'" The author took the remark in considerable dudgeon; but the sparkling young actress, who sincerely esteemed him, exerted all her powers to

smooth the plumes that her wit had ruffled; and she did this with such effect, that the doctor, after offering to cancel the line objected to, invited himself to dine with her, and did so in company with Garrick and rough Quin. "The Brothers" was acted to thin houses for eight nights, and then quietly shelved. The author realised £400 by it; to which adding from his private purse £600 more, he gave the handsome sum of £1000 to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. The author was displeased alike with the town and with the players. The truth is, however, that the fault lay as much with himself as with either. The play was not original, but taken without acknowledgment, from various sources. A great portion is almost literally translated from the French piece, *Persée et Démétrius*. Many of the speeches are taken piecemeal from Livy.

The contest in the third act is splendidly phrased; but the *dénoûment* is so confused and incomplete, that Young was obliged to add an epilogue to explain what was supposed to take place at and after the fall of the curtain! Garrick substituted a coarse epilogue which was spoken by sprightly Kitty Clive, who loved to give coarseness all its point; but it could not save the piece, and it seriously offended the author. Since then, "The Brothers" has descended into that oblivion which fittingly enfolds nearly all the classical tragedies of the last century. It is not without its beauties; but it does not picture the period it affects to pourtray. The "sir" and "madam" sound as harshly as the "*citizen Aga-*

memnon," which the French Republic introduced into Racine's plays; and the epithets are only one degree less absurd than the "*Oui, Milor*," which Voltaire's Beersheba addresses to King David.

Barry's Jaffier, played for the first time on the 21st of November 1752, placed him on an equality with Garrick in that character; but he was not so great in this as in Jones's tragedy, the "Earl of Essex," which he played on the 21st of February, to Smith's Southampton, and the Countess of Rutland of Mrs. Cibber. One sentence in this tragedy, uttered by Barry, seems to have had an almost incredible effect. When the Earl, pointing to the Countess of Rutland in a swoon, exclaimed, "Oh, look there!" Barry's attitude and pathetic expression of voice were such that "all the critics in the pit burst into tears, and then shook the theatre with repeated and unbounded applause." The bricklayer poet, whom Chesterfield brought from Drogheda, only to ultimately die, half-starved, in a garret near Covent Garden, attributed the success of the piece to his own powers, whereas it was due to the wonderful acting of Barry and Mrs. Cibber alone.

With this season James Quin disappeared from the stage. For a year or two he had not acted. The triumphs of Garrick, followed by those of Barry, drove from the scene the old player who, for nearly forty years, belonged to the now bygone school of Betterton, but particularly of Booth, whose succession he worthily held, rather than of Garrick. James Quin stands, however, worthily among, if not on a

level with, those actors of two different eras, having something of each, but yet distinct from either. Such a man deserves a few words in addition to those I have already written.

The theatrical life of Quin embraces the following dates. James Quin began his career in Dublin in 1714, and ended it at Bath in 1753. His first character was Abel in the "Committee;" his last, Hamlet, played at Bath (whither he had retired), not for his own benefit, but for that of his friend, Ryan.[1] Of doing kindnesses to friends, James Quin was never weary; and if he *did* say that Garrick in Othello looked like the black boy in Hogarth's picture he was only temporarily jealous of Roscius. Quin was a careless dresser of his characters; and he had a sharp sarcasm, but not a lasting ill-feeling, for those who pretended to better taste, and gave it practical application.

I have already spoken of Quin's early life; his English birth, his Irish breeding, his disputed legitimacy, and his succession to an estate, from which he was debarred by the rightful proprietors. Necessity and some qualifications directed him to the Dublin stage, where he played under Ashbury, Queen Anne's old master of elocution. Quin, then about one-and-twenty, gave such promise that Chetwood the prompter recommended him "to try London," where at Drury Lane, during three seasons, he played whatever character he was cast for, and made use

[1] Quin's last appearance was for Ryan's benefit; but it was at Covent Garden, and he played Falstaff—19th March 1753.

of opportunity whenever that character happened to be a prominent one.

In 1718 Quin passed to Lincoln's Inn Fields, where for four years[1] he was the great support of that house.[2] I have previously noticed his misadventure with Bowen the actor, whom he slew in honest self-defence under great provocation. It was kind-hearted, but hot-blooded, Quin's hard fate to kill two actors. A subordinate player named Williams was the Decius to Quin's Cato. Williams, in delivering the line "Cæsar sends health to Cato," pronounced the last name so affectedly—something like "Keeto"—that Quin in his impatience could not help exclaiming, "Would he had sent a better messenger!" This greatly irritated the little Welsh actor—the more that he had to repeat the name in nearly every sentence of his scene with Cato, and Quin did not fail to look so hard at him when he pronounced the name that the secondary player's irritation was at the highest when the scene concluded; and Decius turned away, with the remark—

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[1] I think this must be a misprint for fourteen years.

[2] In the second edition Dr. Doran says: "After he passed to Lincoln's Inn Fields, Rich designed to bring forward the 'Merry Wives of Windsor,' but no one seemed daring enough to undertake Falstaff. 'I will venture it,' said Quin, 'if no one else can be found.' 'You!' cried Rich, 'you might as well try Cato after Booth. The character of Falstaff is quite another character from what you think. It is not a little snivelling part that any one can do; and there isn't any man among you that has any idea of the part but myself!' Ultimately Quin 'attempted' the part; his conception of it was admirable, and the house willingly flung itself into a very storm of hilarious jollity."

"When I relate, hereafter,
The tale of this unhappy embassy,
All Rome will be in tears."

That tale, Williams went and told in the green-room, where he waited for Quin, who came off at the end of two scenes more, after uttering the word "death." It was what he brought, without meaning it, to the irascible Welshman, who attacked him on the not unreasonable ground that Quin had rendered him ridiculous in the eyes of the audience; and he demanded the satisfaction which gentlemen who wore swords were in the habit of giving to each other. Quin treated the affair as a mere joke, but the Welsh actor would not be soothed. After the play, he lay in wait for the offender in the Covent-Garden Piazza, where much malapert blood was often spilt. There Quin could not refuse to defend himself, however ill-disposed he was to accept the combat, and after a few passes, Williams lay lifeless on the flag-stones, and Quin was arrested by the watch. Ultimately, he was absolved from blame, and no further harm came of it than the lasting regret of having shed the blood of a fellow-creature.

At a later period, Quin was well-nigh slaying a more ignoble foe than Williams, namely, Theophilus Cibber, whose scoundrelly conduct towards his beautiful and accomplished wife, Quin alluded to, under a very forcible epithet applied to her husband. Out of this incident arose a quarrel, and swords were again drawn in the Piazza, where Quin and Cibber

slashed each other across the arm and fingers, till they were parted by the bystanders.

In 1732, Quin, with the company from the "Fields," established himself in the new theatre in Covent Garden, whence, after two seasons, he passed to Drury Lane, where he continued till 1741; after which, with some intervals, he again enrolled himself at the "Garden," where he remained till he quietly withdrew, in 1751. Of his rivalry with Garrick, I have already said something. If he was vanquished in that contest, he was not humiliated, though I think he was a little humbled in spirit. His great merit is, nevertheless, incontestable. His Cato and Brutus were good; he was excellent in Henry VIII., Volpone, Glo'ster, Apemantus, Ventidius, the Old Batchelor, and "all the Falstaffs." He was happy only in a few speeches of Pierre, especially, "I could have hugged the greasy rogues, they pleased me so!" and his execration of the senate. His Plain Dealer is commended, and the soliloquies of Zanga are eulogised. His Macheath and some other operatic parts, he played and sung extremely well. His failures were Macbeth, Othello, Richard, Lear, Chamont, and Young Bevil. His continuing to play these in opposition to Garrick and Barry censures his judgment. Davies says, he often gave true weight and dignity to sentiment by a well-regulated tone of voice, judicious elocution, and easy deportment. The expression of the tender, as well as of the violent, emotions of the heart was beyond his reach. The plain and the familiar rather

than the striking and the vigorous, became him whose action was either forced or languid, and whose movements were ponderous or sluggish. From the retirement of Booth till the coming of Garrick, Quin can scarcely be said to have had a rival, unless it were the clever but lazy Delane, whose self-indulgence was not accompanied by the energy and industry which went with that of Quin. As Delane fell before Quin, so did Quin fall before the younger energy, and power, and perseverance, of Garrick. James's prophecy that the latter, in founding a new religion,—like Whitfield, would be followed for a time, but that people would all come to church again, was not fulfilled.

Nevertheless, it produced a very fair epigram :—

> "Pope Quin, who damns all churches but his own,
> Complains that heresy affects the town.
> That Whitfield Garrick now misleads the age,
> And taints the sound religion of the stage.
> 'Schism,' he cries, 'has turn'd the nation's brain!'
> 'But eyes will open, and to church again!'
> Thou great Infallible, forbear to roar,
> Thy bulls and errors are rever'd no more.
> When doctrines meet with gen'ral approbation,
> It is not Heresy, but Reformation."

Quin has left some reputation as a humourist. Biographers give the name of his tutor in Dublin, but they add that Quin was illiterate, a character which is hardly established by the best of his *bons mots*. That he was not well read, even in the literature of that profession, of which he was so distinguished a member, is certain ; but he boasted that he could read men more readily than books, and it

is certain that his observation was acute, and the application of what he learned thereby, electrically prompt.

If he was inexorable in enforcing the payment of what was due to him, he was also nobly generous with the fortune he amassed. Meanness was not among the faults of Quin. The greatest injury has been done to his memory by the publication of jests, of a very reprehensible character, and which were said to be his, merely to quicken their sale. He lived in coarse times, and his jokes may have been, now and then, of a coarse quality; but he also said some of the finest things that ever fell from the lips of an intellectual wit.

Of all Quin's jests, there is nothing finer than two which elicited the warm approval of Horace Walpole. Bishop Warburton, in company at Bath, spoke in support of prerogative. Quin said, "Pray, my Lord, spare me; you are not acquainted with my principles. I am a republican; and, perhaps, I even think that the execution of Charles I. might be justified." "Ay!" said Warburton, "by what law?" Quin replied: "By all the laws he had left them." Walpole saw the sum of the whole controversy couched in those eight monosyllables; and the more he examined the sententious truth the finer he found it. The Bishop thought otherwise, and "would have got off upon judgments." He bade the player remember that all the regicides came to violent ends,—a lie, but no matter. "I would not advise your Lordship," said Quin, "to make use of that inference, for, if I

am not mistaken, that was the case of the twelve apostles." Archbishop Whately could not have more logically overthrown conclusions which discern God's anger in individual afflictions.

There is little wonder, then, that Warburton disliked Quin; indeed there was not much love lost between the two men, who frequently met as guests in the house of Ralph Allen, of Prior Park, Bath,—the original of Fielding's Squire Allworthy, and the uncle (Walpole says the father) of Warburton's wife. The Bishop, seldom courteous to any man, treated Quin with an offensively patronising air, and endeavoured to make him feel the distance between them. There was only a difference in their vocations, for Quin, by birth, was, perhaps, rather a better gentleman than Warburton. The latter once, at Allen's house, where the prelate is said to have admonished the player on his too luxurious way of living (the bishop, however, loving custard not less than the actor did John Dory), requested him, as he could not see him on the stage, to recite some passages from dramatic authors, in presence of a large company then assembled in the drawing-room. Quin made some little difficulty; but after a well-simulated hesitation consented, and stood up to deliver passages from "Venice Preserved;" but in reciting the lines

> "Honest men
> Are the soft easy cushions on which knaves
> Repose and fatten,"

he so pointedly directed his looks, at "honest men" to Allen, and at "knaves" to Warburton, that the

company universally marked the application, and the bishop never asked for a taste of the actor's quality again. And yet he is reported to have imitated this very act, with less warrant for it. When Dr. Terrick had been recently (in 1764) promoted from Peterborough to the see of London, a preferment coveted by Warburton, the latter preached a sermon at the Chapel Royal, at which the new Bishop of London was present, amid more august members of the congregation. Warburton took occasion to say that a government which conferred the high trusts of the Church on illiterate and worthless objects betrayed the interests of religion;—and on saying so, he stared Terrick full in the face.

There was no man for whom Quin had such distaste as this unpleasant Bishop of Gloucester, who published an edition of *Shakspeare*. When this was announced, the actor remarked in the green-room of old Drury, "He had better mind his own Bible, and leave ours to us!" Quin was undoubtedly open to censure on the score of his epicurism. He is said to have so loved John Dory as to declare, that for the enjoyment of it, a man "should have a swallow from here to the antipodes, and palate all the way!" and we are told that if, on his servant calling him in the morning, he heard that there was no John Dory in the market, he would turn round, and lazily remark, "then call me again to-morrow." But these are tales more or less coloured to illustrate his way of life. There is one which has more probability in it, which speaks of another incident at Bath. Lord

Chesterfield saw a couple of chairmen helping a heavy gentleman into a sedan, and he asked his servant if he knew who that stout gentleman was? "Only Mr. Quin, my lord, going home, as usual, from the 'Three Tuns.'" "Nay, sir," answered my lord, "I think Mr. Quin is taking one of the three home with him, under his waistcoat!"

His capacity was undoubtedly great, but the over-testing it occasionally affected his acting. An occasion on which he was playing Balance, in the "Recruiting Officer," Mrs. Woffington acting Sylvia, his daughter, affords an instance. In the second scene of the second act he should have asked his daughter, "Sylvia, how old were you when your mother *died?*" instead of which he said "*married.*" Sylvia laughed, and being put out of her cue, could only stammer "What, sir?" "Pshaw!" cried the more confused justice; "I mean, how old were you when your mother *was born?*" Mrs. Woffington recovered her self-possession, and taking the proper cue, said, "You mean, sir, when my mother died. Alas! so young, that I do not remember I ever had one; and you have been so careful, so indulgent to me, ever since, that indeed I never wanted one."

In his latest days, his powers of retort never failed him. He was in that closing season when a fop condoled with him on growing old, and asked what the actor would give to be as young as *he* was? "I would almost be content to be as foolish!" was Quin's reply.

Old Hippisley, who, from a candle-snuffer became

a favourite low comedian, owed much of his power of exciting mirth to a queer expression in his distorted face, caused by a scar from a severe burn. Having some intention to put his son on the stage, he asked Quin's advice as to the preparatory measures. "Hippy," said Quin, "you had better begin by burning him."

Nobody bore with his sharp sayings more cheerfully than Mrs. Woffington. We all know his remark, when Margaret, coming off the stage as Sir Harry Wildair, declared that she believed one half the house thought she was a man. Less known is his comment when, on asking her why she had been to Bath, she answered saucily, "Oh, for mere wantonness!" whereon Quin retorted with, "And have you been cured of it?"

He was one of the few men who could stand a fall with Foote, and come off the better man. Foote, who could not endure a joke made on himself, broke friendship with Quin on account of such offence. Ultimately, they were reconciled; but even then Foote referred to the provocation. "Jemmy, you should not have said that I had but one shirt, and that I lay a-bed while it was washed!" "Sammy," replied Quin, "I never *could* have said so, for I never knew that you had a shirt to wash!"

In the roughest of Quin's jests there was no harm meant, and many of his jokes manifested the kindliness of his heart. Here is an obscure actor, Dick Winston, lying,—hungry, weary, and disengaged,—on a truckle bed, in the neighbourhood of Covent

Garden. He had wilfully forfeited an old engagement, turned itinerant, starved, and had returned, only to find his old place occupied. He is on his back, in utter despair, as Mr. Quin enters, followed by a man carrying a decent suit of clothes; and the great actor hails him with a "Now, Dick, how is it you are not up and at rehearsal?" Quin had heard of his distress, got him restored to his employment, and took this way of announcing it. Winston dressed himself in a state of bewilderment; a new dress and a new engagement,—but no cash wherewith to obtain a breakfast! "Mr. Quin," said he, unhesitatingly, "what shall I do for a little ready money, till Saturday arrives?" "Nay!" replied Quin; "I have done all I can for you; but as for money, Dick, you must put your hand in your own pocket." Quin had put a £10 note there!

Again; when Ryan asked, in an emergency, for a loan, the answer from Quin was, that he had nothing to lend; but he had left Ryan £1000 in his will, and Ryan might have that, if he were inclined to cheat the government of the legacy duty!

Frederick, Prince of Wales, was not half such a practically good patron to Thomson, as James Quin was. When the bard was in distress, Quin gave him a supper at a tavern, for half of which the poet expected he would have to pay; but the player designed otherwise. "Mr. Thomson," said he, "I estimate the pleasure I have had in perusing your works at £100 at least; and you must allow me to settle that account, by presenting you with the

money." What are the small or the great faults of this actor of "all the Falstaffs," when we find his virtues so practical and lively? In return, the minstrel has repaid the good deed with a guerdon of song. In the *Castle of Indolence*, he says:

> "Here whilom ligg'd th' Aesopus of the age;
> But, call'd by Fame, in soul ypricked deep,
> A noble pride restored him to the stage,
> And roused him like a giant from his sleep.
> Even from his slumbers we advantage reap:
> With double force th' enlivened scene he wakes,
> Yet quits not Nature's bounds. He knows to keep
> Each due decorum: now the heart he shakes,
> And now with well-urged sense th' enlightened judgment takes."

The actor had a great regard for the poet, and was not only active in bringing forward his posthumous tragedy, "Coriolanus," in which Quin played the principal character, in 1749, but spoke the Hon. George Lyttleton's celebrated prologue with such feeling, that he could not restrain his tears; and with such effect, that the audience were moved, it is said, in like manner:—

> "He lov'd his friends;—forgave this gushing tear;
> Alas! I feel I am no actor here;"

and Quin's eyes glistened, as he went through the noble eulogy of a poet, whose

> "Muse employ'd her heaven-taught lyre,
> None but the noblest passions to inspire;
> Not one immoral, one corrupted thought,
> One line, which, dying, he could wish to blot."

The last night Quin played as an engaged actor, was at Covent Garden, on the 15th of May 1751; the play was the "Fair Penitent," in which he acted

Horatio to the Lothario of Barry, and the Calista of Mrs. Cibber. After this he quietly withdrew, without leave-taking, returning only once or twice to play for the benefit of a friend. In his later years, his professional income is said to have reached £1000 a year. He was the first English actor who received £50 a night, during a part of his career. The characters he created were in pieces which have died off the stage, save Comus, which he acted with effective dignity in the season of 1737–8;—a part in which Mr. Macready distinguished himself, during his memorable management of Drury Lane.

Quin's social position, after leaving the stage, was one congenial to a man of his merits, taste, and acquirements. He was a welcome guest at many noble hearths—from that of ducal Chatsworth to that of modest Allen's at Prior Park. At the former he and Garrick met. There had not been a cordial intimacy between the two as actors; but as private gentlemen they became friends. This better state of things was owing to the kindly feeling of Quin. The two men were left alone in a room at Chatsworth, and Quin made the first step towards a reconciliation by asking a question the most agreeable he could put—inquiring after Mrs. Garrick's health. In this scene the two men come before me as distinct as a couple of figures drawn by Meissonier—quaint in costume, full of character and life, pleasant to look at and to remember.

Quin was Garrick's guest at Hampton, when he was stricken in 1765 with the illness which ulti-

mately proved fatal. He died, however, in his own house in Bath. "I could wish," he said the day before, "that the last tragic scene were over; and I hope I may be enabled to meet and pass through it with dignity." He passed through it becomingly on the 21st of January 1766; and Garrick placed the following lines on the old actor's tomb in the Abbey—a pyramid of Sienna marble, bearing a medallion portrait of Quin, resting on a sarcophagus, on which the inscription is engraved, supported by the mask of Thalia and the dagger of Melpomene.

"That tongue which set the table in a roar,
And charmed the public ear, is heard no more;
Clos'd are those eyes, the harbingers of wit,
Which spake, before the tongue, what Shakspere writ.
Cold is that hand which, living, was stretch'd forth
At friendship's call, to succour modest worth.
Here lies JAMES QUIN. Deign, reader, to be taught,
Whate'er thy strength of body, force of thought,
In nature's happiest mould however cast,
To this complexion thou must come at last."

Kind-hearted people have remarked that Garrick never said so much to, or of, Quin when he was alive. Perhaps not. He struggled with Quin for mastery—vanquished him; became his friend, and hung up over his grave a glowing testimony to his talent and his virtues. This was in the spirit of old chivalry. What would kind-hearted people have? Was it not well in Garrick to speak truthfully of one dead whom, when living, he thus with pleasant satire described as soliloquising at the tomb of Duke Humphrey at St. Albans—

"A plague on Egypt's art, I say!
Embalm the dead! On senseless clay

Rich wines and spices waste !
Like sturgeon, or like brawn, shall I
Bound in a precious pickle lie,
Which I can never taste ?
Let me embalm this flesh of mine
With turtle fat, and Bordeaux wine,
And spoil th' Egyptian trade !
Than Humphry's Duke more happy I,
Embalm'd alive, old Quin shall die
A mummy ready made."

As a tailpiece to this sketch, I cannot, I think, do better than subjoin Foote's portrait of Quin, which, I will hope, was not drawn to disparage any of Quin's great survivors, but in all honesty and sincerity. "Mr. Quin's deportment through the whole cast of his characters is natural and unaffected, his countenance expressive without the assistance of grimace, and he is, indeed, in every circumstance, so much the person he represents, that it is scarcely possible for any attentive spectator to believe that the hypocritical, intriguing Maskwell, the suspicious superannuated rake, the snarling old bachelor, and the jolly, jocose Jack Falstaff are imitated, but real persons.

"And here I wish I had room and ability to point out the severe masterly strokes with which Mr. Quin has often entertained my imagination, and satisfied my judgment, but, under my present confinement, I can only recommend the man who wants to see a character perfectly played, to see Mr. Quin in the part of Falstaff; and if he does not express a desire of spending an evening with that merry mortal, why, I would not spend one with him, if he would pay my reckoning."

"With a bottle of claret and a full house," it may well be concluded, from all concurrent testimony, Quin was, in fat Jack, unapproachable. In the traditions of the stage, he still remains *the* Falstaff, though Henderson was subsequently thought to have equalled him in many of the points of that character.

Finally, Quin's will is not uninstructive as an illustration of the actor's character. There is, perhaps, not a friend he had possessed, or servant who had been faithful to him, who is forgotten in it. Various are the bequests, from £50 to a cousin practising medicine in Dublin, to £500 and a share of the residue to a kind-hearted oilman in the Strand. To one individual he bequeaths his watch, in accordance with an "imprudent promise" to that effect. James Quin did not like the man, but he would not break his word! *Requiescat in pace!*

Mr. King as Lord Ogleby.

OLD THEATRE ROYAL, EDINBURGH.

CHAPTER XI.

ENGLAND AND SCOTLAND.

In 1753-4 Mrs. Cibber returned to Drury; she played Juliet to Garrick's Romeo, and with him in every piece that admitted of their playing together. But Barry gained in Miss Nossiter a Juliet, not, indeed, equal to Mrs. Cibber, but one who increased his own ardour and earnestness in Romeo, his tenderness and anxiety in Jaffier, and his truth and playfulness as Florizel, inasmuch as that they were mutually in love, and all the house was in the secret.

Miss Nossiter, however, did not realise her early promise. Contemporary critics speak of the novice as

being of a delicate figure, graceful in the expression of distress, but requiring carefulness in the management of her voice, and a more simple elocution. One of her judges curiously remarks :—"She frequently alarmed the audience with the most striking attitudes." The critic recovers from *his* alarm when speaking of another *debutante* (Mrs. Elmey), who acted Desdemona to Barry's Othello. "No part," he says, "has been better represented in our memory," and "we scarce knew what it was before she acted it."

Of poor Miss Nossiter there is little more recorded than that, at the end of a brief career, she died, after bequeathing to Barry, the Romeo, for whom more than Miss Nossiter professed to be dying,—£3000.

Mossop succeeded Quin, at Drury Lane, with credit.[1] Foote left "entertaining" at the Haymarket to play the Cibber parts in comedy, and he was ably seconded by Woodward, Mrs. Pritchard, and Kitty Clive. Miss Bellamy and Shuter passed to the Garden, the latter increasing in favour each night, as opportunity afforded. With the exception of minor pieces, and a revival of "King John," in which Garrick was an unlikely Faulconbridge, and Mossop a superb tyrant, the audiences were taken back to heavy classical tragedies. Drury played Glover's "Boadicea," a criticism of which is amusingly given by Walpole. "There is a new play of Glover's, in which Boadicea (Pritchard) rants as much as Visconti screams; but, happily, you hear no more of her after the third act,

[1] I do not understand what is meant here. Mossop could not be said, in any sense, to succeed Quin.

till, in the last scene, somebody brings a card with her compliments, and she is very sorry she cannot wait upon you, but she is dead. Then there is a scene between Lord Sussex and Cathcart, two captains" (Ænobarbus and Flaminius—Mossop and Havard), "which is most incredibly absurd; but yet the parts are so well acted, the dresses so fine, and two or three scenes pleasing enough, that it is worth seeing." Archbishop Herring thought the last two acts admirable. "In the fifth particularly, I hardly ever felt myself so strongly touched."

Of a second tragedy, Crisp's "Virginia," Walpole says it flourished through Garrick's acting. Murphy states that "the manner in which Garrick uttered two words, crowned the play with success; when in a low tone of voice that spoke the fulness of a broken heart, he pronounced, "Thou traitor!" the whole audience was electrified, and testified their delight by a thunder of applause. It was, however, a poor play, even for a custom-house officer, who, by the way, made Appius (Mossop) propose to marry Virginia. Marcia was played by Mrs. Graham; Garrick did not think much of her; but we shall hear of her again as the great Mrs. Yates.

The third classical tragedy was Whitehead's "Creusa," founded on the *Ion* of Euripides. Walpole praises the interest, complexity, yet clearness and natural feeling of the plot. "It is the only new tragedy that I ever saw and really liked. The circumstance of so much distress being brought on by characters, every one good, yet acting consistently

with their principles towards the misfortunes of the drama, is quite new and pleasing." As a reading play, I think "Creusa" is the greatest success Whitehead has achieved.

On the other hand, M'Namara Morgan's romantic tragedy "Philoclea" owed much of its ephemeral success to the fire, grace, beauty, and expression of Barry and Miss Nossiter (Pyrocles and Philoclea), the two lovers. The house literally "sighed like furnace" for very sympathy. The Rev. Mr. Genest says truly, "that the play is a poor play, but that the epilogue is not bad;"—it is a mass of uncleanness, worthy of the Ravenscroft whom Genest admired. As for Dr. Francis's "Constantine," in which Barry and Mrs. Bellamy played Constantine and Fulvia, it was a failure; but, *therefore*, Mrs. Bellamy recommended the author to the patronage of Fox; and it is certain that the father of Sir Philip Francis owed his promotion to the Suffolk rectory of Barrow to Lord Holland. There is something amusing in the idea of George Anne Bellamy indirectly nominating to Church benefices!

In the season of 1754–5, Garrick was relieved by the absence of Barry, who left Rich for Dublin, taking Miss Nossiter with him, at a salary of £1300 for both, for the season, and predicting ruin to Rich. The latter falsified the prediction, by bringing out Sheridan in all his best parts against Garrick, and in "Coriolanus," against Mossop. Sheridan and Dyer also played Romeo, greatly to the benefit of Barry; but Rich got well through his season with the above, and

in spite of a tragedy, called "Appius," the ill success of which was reasonably attributed by the author, Moncrieff, to the fact that Sheridan had lopped off the fifth act; pantomime supplied its place.

Garrick, in addition to his old parts, created Achmet in "Barbarossa;" Mossop playing the tyrant, and Mrs. Cibber, Zaphira. His other novelties were the "Fairies," and the masque of "Britannia;" the latter àpropos to the war. I do not know if Dr. Browne, the vicar of Great Horkesley, could have civilised the yet uncivilised dominion of Russia, as Catharine invited him to do; but he assuredly wrote a poor yet lucky tragedy, for it has lived while better have sunk into oblivion. It is "Merope" re-cast and dressed. "There is not one new thought in it," wrote Walpole; "and, which is the next material want, but one line of perfect nonsense. 'And rain down transports in the shape of sorrow!' To complete it, the manners are so ill-observed, that a Mahometan princess-royal is at full liberty to visit her lover in Newgate, like the banker's daughter in 'George Barnwell.'"

Walpole's criticism on the "Fairies" is not less smart. "Garrick has produced a detestable English opera, which is crowded by all true lovers of their country. To mark the opposite to Italian opera, it is sung by some cast singers, two Italians, a French girl, and the chapel-boys; and to regale us with sauce, it is Shakspeare's 'Midsummer Night's Dream;' which," he adds, as if he inherited the feelings of Pepys with regard to this poetical play, "is forty times more nonsensical than the worst translation of any Italian opera books."

At the short summer season in the Haymarket, where Theophilus Cibber and his eccentric sister, Mrs. Charke, were at the head of "Bayes's" new-raised company of comedians, there appeared on the 21st of August, 1755, Miss Barton, in Miranda, to Cibber's Marplot. Besides this, and other comic characters, Miss Barton acted Desdemona. Not many years before this she was a shoeless flower-girl, purer looking than any of her own roses, in St. James's Park. We shall hear of her anon, under a name than which there is not a brighter in theatrical annals—the name of Abington.

The season of 1755–6 was remarkable for the fact that Garrick made three very absurd assaults on Shakspeare, by producing *emendations* of the "Winter's Tale," "Taming of the Shrew," and the "Tempest," cutting, clipping, adding, taking away, and saying the while :—

> "'Tis my chief wish, my joy, my only plan,
> To lose no drop of that immortal man!"

This season was also remarkable for the riot consequent on his producing the "Chinese Festival," when the public, hating the French, with whom we were at war, insisted on his asking pardon for the introduction of Swiss, Germans, and Italians! Garrick proudly answered, that if they would not allow him to go on with his part (Archer), he would never, *never*, again set foot on the stage! It was, further, famous for the failure of "Athelstan," by Dr. Browne, which fell, though it was a better tragedy than "Barbarossa." The disappointed author, it will be

remembered, destroyed himself.[1] Still more famous was this season, for the fray between the Rival Queens, Woffington—Roxana, and Bellamy—Statira; when the superb dresses of the latter drove poor Peg into such fury, that she nearly stabbed her rival in downright earnest. Failing in her attempt, she stabbed her with words, and taunted Bellamy with having a minister (Henry Fox) who indulged her in such extravagances. "And you," retorted the other "gentle creature," "have half the town who do not!" But not for these things, nor for Foote's satirical farces against Murphy, nor for Murphy's against Foote, was the season so famous, as it was for being that in which Barry, now returned to Covent Garden, entered the lists once more against Garrick, after playing a round of his most successful characters, by acting King Lear with Miss Nossiter as Cordelia, which part Mrs. Cibber played to Garrick's King.

In this contest Garrick carried away the palm. Barry was dignified, impressive, pathetic, but unequal, failing principally in the mad scenes, which appear to have been over-acted. It was precisely there where Garrick was most sublime, natural, and affecting. There was no rant, no violence, no grimacing. The feeble, miserable, but still royal old man was there; slow of motion, vague of look, uncertain, forgetful of all things save of the cruelty of

[1] This conveys a very wrong impression. "Athelstan" was played thirteen times; that is, it was a great success at the time. Dr. Browne did not destroy himself until ten years after "Athelstan's" production.

his daughters. It was said for Barry that he was "every inch a king;" for Garrick, that he was "every inch King Lear." The wits who admired the latter repeated the epigram—

> "The town has found out diff'rent ways,
> To praise the different Lears;
> To Barry they give loud huzzas!
> To Garrick—only tears."[1]

others quoted the lines alluding to Garrick's jealousy—

> "Critics attend! and judge the rival Lears;
> While each commands applause, and each your tears.
> Then own this truth—well he performs his part
> Who touches—even Garrick to the heart."

Drury Lane, in 1756–57, offers little for remark. Miss Pritchard appeared in Juliet—only to show that talent is not hereditary; and Garrick ventured King Lear, with a little less of Tate, and a little more of Shakspeare; he was as resolute, however, against introducing the Fool as he was with respect to the Gravediggers in Hamlet. On the other hand, he acted Don Felix. Gracefully as Garrick played the part, Walpole said "he was a monkey to Lord Henry Fitzgerald" (who played this character admirably in private). The Violante of Miss Macklin was acted with astonishing effect. When Garrick was weary, his parts were "doubled" by handsome Holland, the son of the Chiswick baker, and destined to carry grief to the honest heart of Miss Pope. The dramatic poets raised no new echoes in Drury this

[1] These lines were written by Berenger, Deputy-master of the Horse.

season—some farces excepted. One of these was the "Reprisal," by Smollet, who showed that if he could not write a good tragedy at nine-and-twenty, he could dash off a lively farce at seven-and-thirty. With this farce the ablest of novelists and harshest of critics closed his theatrical career. The second farce was Foote's "Author," in which he and Mrs. Clive acted Mr. and Mrs. Cadwallader, and the former exultingly held up to ridicule one of his most intimate friends, Mr. Apreece, taking care to have him among the audience on the first night!

At the other house, Barry failed in Richard III.; but the treasury recovered itself by the production, in March, of "Douglas," in which Barry, six feet high, and in a suit of white puckered satin, played Norval to the Lady Randolph of Mrs. Woffington. The originals of those parts, when the piece was first played in Edinburgh, in the previous December, were Digges and Mrs. Ward. This piece was the glory of the Scottish stage, and a scandal to great part of the community. Before the curtain rises let me say a few words on the growth of that stage.

There have been stringent rules in Scotland with regard to the theatre, but they have been accompanied by much general toleration. The Regent Murray cheerfully witnessed the performance of a drama; and the General Assembly, in 1574,[1] though they prohibited all dramas founded on Scripture, permitted the representation of "profane plays." The licensers were the Kirk Session, before which body

[1] March 1574–75; that is, as we should say, March 1575.

the piece was first read; and if license was accorded for its being acted, stipulation was made that nothing should be added to the text which had been read, and that "nae swearing, banning, nor nae scurrility shall be spoken, whilk would be a scandal to our religion and for an evil example to others."

When, however, James VI. manifested a wish to see the English company which arrived in Edinburgh in 1599, by granting it a license to act, the General Kirk Session of the city denounced all players and their patrons—the former as unruly and immodest, the latter as irreligious and indiscreet. This opposition led to a conference between the Session and the angry King, at which the former were obliged to withdraw their denunciations, which had been made from all the pulpits; and they authorised all men "to repair to the said comedies and plays without any pain, reproach, censure, or slander, to be incurred by them." Individual ministers were sorely discontent with such proceedings of the Session; and this feeling increased, when a play, "Marciano, or the Discovery," was acted in 1662, "with great applause, before His Majesty's High Commissioner, and others of the nobility, at the Abbey of Holyrood House, on St. John's night." In the preface of this very play, the drama in Scotland was likened to a "drunken swaggerer in a country church!"

It does not appear that any regular theatre existed in Edinburgh previous to 1679, when the brothers Fountain held from Charles II. the patent of "Masters of the Revels, within the Kingdom of

Scotland."[1] The Fountains not only erected a playhouse, but they subsequently sought to suppress all balls and entertainments held in the dancing-masters' schools, as discouraging to the playhouse, which "the petitioners had been at great charge in erecting." Accordingly, such balls, unless duly licensed, were suppressed. As Mr. Robert Chambers remarks in his *Domestic Annals of Scotland*, "It sounds strange to hear of a dancing-master's ball in our city, little more than a month after the battle of Bothwell Bridge, and while a thousand poor men were lodging on the cold ground in the Greyfriars' Churchyard!"

There was no regular theatrical season,—players came and went according to the chances of profit afforded by the presence of great personages in the capital. In 1681, the Duke and Duchess of York were sojourning there; and just at that time, thirty joyous-looking folk were being detained by the Customs' authorities at Irvine, in Ayrshire, where they had landed, and where they were in difficulty, on questions of duties on the gold and silver lace of their wardrobe. Laced clothes were then highly taxed; but, said the gay fellows, who, in truth, were actors, with actresses from the theatre in Orange Street, Dublin, "these clothes, mounted with gold and silver lace, are not for our wear, but are necessary in our vocation, and are, therefore, exempt." They had to petition the Privy Council, which body, submitting to the plea of the actors, that "trumpeters

[1] The Fountains had their patent as early as 1673.

and stage-players" were exempted from the Act, sent a certificate to the tax-collector at Irvine, to let them pass free, and come up and act "Agrippa, King of Alba, or the False Tiberinus," and other dramas, before all lieges in Edinburgh, who were inclined to listen to them.

This incident reminds me of an anecdote of Talma, which was communicated to me by a French actor. Talma was stopped, like the Irish players at Irvine, at the Custom-house on the Belgian frontier, as he was on his way to fulfil an engagement at Brussels. His theatrical costumes were undergoing examination, when an official irreverently spoke of them as "Habits de Polichinelle." The tragic actor was offended. "*Habits de Polichinelle!*" said he, "they are of the utmost value. That lace is worth fifty francs a yard, and I wear it constantly in private." "And must therefore pay for it," said the sharp Belgian official; "Punch's clothes might pass untaxed, but Mr. Talma's laced coats owe a duty to the King," which he was forced to acquit.

With the fall of the Stuarts and the establishment of Presbytery, a sour feeling against the stage prevailed in Scotland. Mr. R. Chambers attributes a later improved feeling to the Southern gentlemen who were sent northward to hold office, and who took with them tastes which were gradually adopted; at first by Episcopalians, and later by Presbyterians themselves.

There is a smith's shop near Holyrood, which, in 1715, was part of a Tennis Court, which, in that

year, and just before the outbreak, was converted into a theatre. It was well attended, and furiously denounced; even solemn kirk folk flocked to listen to the old and modern playwrights, despite the threats of their ministers that, from all such, they would withhold the "tokens to the Sacrament of the Supper." The presbytery of Edinburgh fulminated every species of menace against the new stage and its upholders, but the latter had a fatally amusing comment to make on such fulminations. Only the year previously, three of these very ministers, Mitchell, Ramsay, and Hart, sent as a deputation to congratulate George I. on his accession, rested on their way at Kendal, where there was a little theatre, whither these good men repaired to see Congreve's "Love for Love" acted, and thought nobody would tell of their backsliding!

The Scottish Tennis Court theatre did not prosper even so well as that in Lincoln's Inn Fields. Eleven years after the above date, although we hear of a performance of Otway's "Orphan," with a prologue by Allan Ramsay, it is in "private;"[1] but adverse critics are informed, that they will have to support their opinions, by the duello, in the King's Park.

In the same year, 1726, Anthony Aston, that erratic actor, "after a circuit round the Queen of Isles," as another prologue by Mr. Allan Ramsay said of him, re-appeared in Edinburgh with a theatrical company.

[1] This performance took place in 1719; four years after the above date, not eleven.

"The dastards said, 'He never will succeed:'
What! such a country look for any good in,
That does not relish plays, nor pork, nor pudding!"

Aston had to contend against the utmost efforts of the clergy and magistracy. Nevertheless, ruling elders, who were peers of the realm, Lords of Session and other amateurs, went and wept at graceful Westcombe and handsome Mrs. Millar, in the "Mourning Bride," and a son of Bishop Ross, and master of the Beaux' Coffee House, charged a commission of a penny on every playhouse ticket sold in his establishment. Then, even Lord Grange, the most profligate ruffian in all Scotland, was alarmed for Scottish morals, when he heard that Allan Ramsay had founded a circulating library, and was lending out English playbooks. The magistrates, moved by that arch-villain, Grange,—than whom there was not a man so given to drink, devilry, and devotion,—sent inspectors to learn from Ramsay's books the names of his subscribers. Allan had timely warning; and he destroyed his list before the obnoxious jurors presented themselves. The pulpits re-echoed with denunciations against acting and episcopacy, and *men* who were carried to the theatres in sedans,—oh! what had come to Scottish thews and sinews, when such a spectacle as this was to be seen in old Edinburgh!

In 1733 and 1734, Shakspeare was in the ascendant at the theatre at the Tailors' Hall, in the Cowgate, varied by the works of Gay, Congreve, and Mrs. Centlivre; pantomime, ballet and farce; with ex-

cellent scenery, and machinery, — the troop occasionally visiting Dundee, Montrose, and Aberdeen. Dramatic taste spread to schools, where the pupils began to act plays. While this was confined to "Cato," "Julius Cæsar," and the like, there was no harm done; but when the Perth schoolboys, at Candlemas 1735, took to acting "George Barnwell," the Kirk Session once more bestirred itself, and shut up the house built by Allan Ramsay, in Carrubber's Close.[1] Subsequently, Ryan, the actor, laid the first stone of a new theatre in the Canongate, which was opened in 1746, but without sanction of law, which, however, was not so rigorous as in earlier days, when Lord Somerville, to screen a principal performer from stern pains and penalties, engaged him in his household, as butler! To this theatre, in 1756, the Rev. John Home, then thirty-two years of age, brought his tragedy of "Douglas." He had been the successor of Blair (of the *Grave*), in the living of Athelstanford; and had left it, to fight against the Pretender, at Falkirk, where he was captured. The reverend warrior ultimately escaped to England. Collins dedicated to him his *Ode on the Superstitions of the Highlands.* Home returned northward, full of the love of poetry, and powerful in the expression of it. His great dramatic essay was a grievous offence against the laws of his church, to the practical duties of which he had again surrendered himself. Had it not been that Sarah Ward was willing

[1] There was no connection between these two events, as the theatre in Carrubber's Close was not built till 1736.

to help author and friends, even the reading of "Douglas" would never have come off. Sarah lent her sitting-room in the Canongate, to Home; and Digges was present and silent, for once, with Mrs. Ward, to enact audience. The characters were thus cast; and a finer group of intellectual persons sitting as they could best catch the light, in an obscure room of the Canongate, cannot well be imagined. Lord Randolph (or Barnard, according to the original cast) was read by Robertson; Glenalvon, by the greater historian, David Hume; Old Norval, by the famous Dr. Carlyle, the minister of Musselburgh; and Douglas, by Home, in right of authorship. Lady Randolph was allotted to Professor Ferguson; and the part of Anna was read by Dr. Blair, the minister of the High Church, and author of the once popular sermons!

But the Presbyteries of Edinburgh and Glasgow speedily denounced author, play, dramatists, and dramas generally, as instruments and children of Satan; and excommunicated, not only Home, but actors and audiences, and all abettors and approvers! The triumph of the play compensated for everything. The nation confirmed the sentiment of the critic in the pit, whose voice was heard in the ovation of the first night, exultantly exclaiming, "Weel, lads, what do ye think o' Wully Shakspeare noo?" The tragedy was offered to Garrick, who refused it. Mrs. Cibber, in Lady Randolph, would extinguish Norval! Rich accepted it, as readily as Garrick had declined it; and in March 1757 London confirmed the judgment of the

city in the north. Gray declared that Home had retrieved the true language of the stage, which had been lost for a century. The Prince of Wales conferred a pension on the expelled minister, and Sheridan sent to Home a gold medal, worth ten guineas.

Just a century before Home was denounced by the Presbytery, Adam Seaton, dwelling near John O'Groats, where Cromwell's troops were encamped, on their way to the Orkneys, was condemned to make public confession in the Kirk, for "having masking playes in his house for the Inglishe men." This extract from the old Session record of the parish of Canisby (quoted in Calder's *History of Caithness*), shows how the drama "looked up," in remote Scottish localities, in spite of the decree of 1647. A Presbyterian, lending his house to amateur, or professional, actors in Cromwell's army, is a novel illustration in the history of the stage. Much might be said thereon; but Margaret Woffington, the original Lady Randolph in England, now retires from the scene, and waits the telling of her story.

MRS GARRICK.

CHAPTER XII.

MARGARET WOFFINGTON.

That good-tempered woman, who is looking with admiration at the pretty and delicate child who is drawing water from the Liffey, is Madame Violante. She is mistress of a booth for rope-dancing and other exhibitions in Dame Street. As the young girl turns homeward, with the bowl of water on her head, the lady follows, still admiring.

The object of her admiration is as bright and as steady as a sunbeam. If she be ill-clad, she is exquisitely shaped, and she will live to lend her dresses to the two Miss Gunnings, to enable them to attend

a drawing-room at the Castle; their first steps towards reaching the coronets of countess and duchess that were in store for them.

This child, meanwhile, enters a shabby huckster's shop, kept by her widowed mother, on Ormond Quay. The father was a working bricklayer, and married the mother when she was as hard-working a laundress. There is another child in this poor household, a sister of the water-bearer, fair, but less fair than she. When Madame Violante first saw Mary and Margaret Woffington, she little dreamed that the latter would be the darling of London society, and the former the bride of a son of one of the proudest of English earls.

Margaret Woffington, born in 1720,[1] was very young when Madame Violante induced her mother to let her have the pretty child as a pupil. The foreign lady was of good repute, and Margaret became an apt pupil, performed little tricks while her mistress was on the rope, learned French thoroughly, and acquired graces of person, style, and carriage, by which she gained fortune, and reaped ruin.

As a child, she played Macheath,[2] in Madame's booth, when the "Beggar's Opera" was acted there by children. From the age of seventeen to twenty, she was on the more regular Dublin stage, charming all eyes and hearts by her beauty, grace, and ability in a range of characters from Ophelia to Sir Harry

[1] She was probably born some years earlier. Wilkinson says she was about forty-four when she gave up the stage—that is, in 1757.

[2] This is a popular error. Miss Betty Barnes (afterwards Mrs. Workman) was the Macheath; Woffington played Polly.

Wildair.[1] Rich at once engaged her, at a moderate salary, and, in 1740, brought her out, at Covent Garden, as Sylvia to Ryan's Plume and the younger Cibber's Brazen. A successful *coup d'éssai* emboldened her to try Sir Harry. She played it night after night for weeks, and Wilks was forgotten. It is said she so enraptured one susceptible damsel, that the young lady, believing Sir Harry to be a man, made him an offer of marriage.

Walpole was among the last to be pleased. "There is much in vogue, a Mrs. Woffington," he writes, in 1741; "a bad actress, but she has life." Walpole's friend, Conway, confesses that "all the town was in love with her;" but to Conway's eyes she was only "an impudent Irish-faced girl." Even these fastidious gentlemen became converted, and, at a later period, Walpole records her excellent acting in Moore's "Foundling," with Garrick, Barry, and Mrs. Cibber.

Her Lothario was not so successful as her Sir Harry; but her high-born ladies, her women of dash, spirit, and elegance, her homely, humorous females, in all these she triumphed; and triumphed in spite of a voice that was almost unmanageable for its harshness.

Margaret and Garrick were very soon on very intimate terms. In the summer of 1742, they were together in Dublin, and on their return, according to a tradition of the stage, Garrick and Mrs. Woffing-

[1] She made her first appearance in a speaking part on 12th February 1737, but she had been engaged as a dancer for some years previously.

ton, living together, alternately supplied the expenses of the household, each being at the head of the latter during a month. In Garrick's term the table is said to have been but moderately furnished; whereas during the beautiful Margaret's month there was a banquet and brilliant company daily; all the fashionable men about town being delighted at an invitation from the Irish actress. Johnson used to be among those visitors, and he noticed the difference in the quality of the housekeeping, after his usual fashion. "Is not this tea stronger than usual, madam? It's as red as blood!"[1] It was Margaret's month, and the liberal lady smiled.

That Garrick ever entertained thoughts of marrying Margaret, I very much doubt, despite the story, said to have been told by the lady to Murphy, that he had gone so far as to buy the wedding-ring, and try it on her finger. In the early part of the few years which elapsed between Garrick's *debût* in London and his marriage with Eva Maria Violetti, he lived in such affectionate intimacy with the charming Irish actress, as to address to her the song beginning with

> "Once more I'll tune the vocal shell,
> To hills and dales my passion tell,
> A flame which time can never quell,
> Which burns for you, my Peggy!"[2]

Notwithstanding this homage, the lady's infidelities were so numerous, that whatever may have been her

[1] The correct form of the story is that Garrick grumbled at the strength of the tea, remarking that it was as red as blood.

[2] These verses were really written by Sir Charles Hanbury Williams.

wrath or disappointment, she had no right to expect that of so inconstant a mistress of *one* home, Garrick was likely to make the wife of another. However this may have been, it remains undeniable that Garrick preserved, to his last days, a pair of silver buckles which once belonged to that Peggy, who, from first to last, enthralled more hearts than any actress since the days of Elizabeth Barry;—from those of young fellows with the down just budding on their lips, to what was left of those of old Owen Mac Swiney and older Colley Cibber, between which two ancient danglers, people compared Margaret to Susanna between the two Elders.

In good truth, her company was sought after "by men of the first rank and distinction;" and "persons of the gravest character, and most eminent for learning," felt honoured by her acquaintance, and were charmed with her conversation. She founded her avowed preference of the company of men to that of women, on the alleged fact that the latter never talked but of satins and silks. She herself was endowed with a good understanding, which was much improved by contact with intellectual society, and by much reading. In short, it seems to have been impossible to resist this clever, vivacious, affable, and good-natured creature; one who laughed most unaffectedly at the joke which touched her own character nearest; whose errors are forgotten in her much-abounding and still-enduring charity, and who not only faithfully kept that part of the decalogue which says, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's

wife," but provided a home for her neighbours' wives, through many generations, by building the asylum for them, which still exists at Teddington. "Mes enfans, sauvez-vous par la charité!"

Margaret Woffington was the most beautiful and the least vain of the women of her day. Whatever character she had to play, she identified herself therewith; and did it happen to be that of an old or ordinary woman, she descended to the level of circumstances, and hid every natural beauty beneath wrinkles and stolidity, according to the exigencies of the part.

Her sister, Mary Woffington, whom many living persons remember well, failed comparatively as an actress; but she achieved better fortune as a woman than her more able and attractive sister. By marriage she connected herself with Walpole's family, and Walpole, whose mother was the daughter of a timber-dealer, was disgusted.

"I have been unfortunate in my own family," says Walpole to Mann, in 1746; "my nephew, Captain Cholmondeley, has married a player's sister." This last was Mrs. Woffington's sister, Mary. Captain, subsequently the Reverend Robert Cholmondeley, was the second son of the Earl Cholmondeley, who obtained Houghton, by marrying Walpole's only legitimate sister, Mary. At the match between the captain and the player's sister the earl was greatly incensed, and he went to Mrs. Woffington to tell her as much. But Margaret so softened him by her winning ways,

and won him by her good sense, and subdued him to her will, that he, at last, called her his "dear Mrs. Woffington," and declared that he was happy at his son's choice, in spite of his having been "so very much offended previously." This aroused Margaret's spirit a little. "Offended previously!" she exclaimed, "I have most cause to be offended now." "Why, dear lady?" asked the earl. "Because," replied the actress, "I had one beggar to support, and now I shall have two!"

Of this marriage, Mrs. Woffington lived to see five of the nine children born. One of these, married to Sir William Bellingham, Bart., carried the Woffington blood back to one of the oldest families in Ireland. Another of Margaret Woffington's nieces was Maid of Honour to the Princess of Wales; who, when driving with her royal mistress through Leatherhead, in 1806, was killed by the upsetting of the carriage. Mary Woffington (the Hon. Mrs. Cholmondeley) survived till 1811.

To see Margaret Woffington and Smith in Sylvia and Plume was an ecstasy, *he* being so graceful and vivacious, while *she* charmed her audiences in both the dresses worn by Sylvia, rendering, says the *Dramatic Censor*, "even absurdities pleasing by the elegance of her appearance and the vivacity of her expression." Mrs. Bellamy was so overcome by her acting Jocasta in that awful drama of "Œdipus," that she fainted on the stage when playing Eurydice to her. Some persons set this down to affectation;

but George Anne was not a lady likely to affect a swoon for the sake of complimenting a rival actress.[1]

Mrs. Woffington was the only player who acted Sir Harry Wildair with the spirit and elegance of the original—Wilks, to whom Garrick and Woodward were, in this part, inferior. She was excellent in Lady Plyant, and admirable in the representation of females in high rank and of dignified elegance. Millamant, Lady Townley, Lady Betty Modish, and Maria, in the "Nonjuror," were exhibited by her with that happy ease and gaiety, and with such powerful attraction, that the excesses of these characters appeared not only pardonable, but agreeable.

Her Jane Shore did not admit of competition with Mrs. Oldfield's; but that and Hermione were full of merit notwithstanding. In male attire the elegance of her figure was most striking; but I cannot suppose that her Lady Randolph, of which she was the original representative in London, in any one point approached that of Mrs. Crawford (Barry), or of Mrs. Siddons. Indeed her voice unfitted her for tragic parts. She called it her "bad voice!"

Margaret Woffington's independence was one of the great traits in her character. About six years before Mrs. Cibber left the stage[2] she was often too indisposed to act; and at short notice Mrs. Woffington was advertised to play some favourite part of

[1] This is very fanciful. Mrs. Bellamy does not hint that Mrs. Woffington had anything to do with her faint. In fact she sneers at her playing of Jocasta.

[2] This incident occurred in January 1751, about fifteen years before Mrs. Cibber left the stage.

her own instead. Once, when thus advertised, she pleaded illness, and would not go to the theatre. The next night, as Mrs. Woffington came on, as Lady Jane Grey, she was greeted with a hurricane of hisses for having failed to appear the evening before. They even called upon her to "beg pardon!" *then* her complexion glowed with angry beauty, her eyes flashed lightning, and she walked off the stage magnificently scornful. It was with great difficulty she was induced to return, and when she *did*, the imperious fair one calmly faced her excited audience with a "*now then!*" sort of look. She expressed her willingness to perform her duty, but it was for them to decide; "On or off; it must be as you please; to me it is a matter of perfect indifference!" The audience petted this wayward creature, and the contending parties were friends for ever after.

Margaret and Kitty Clive got on as ill together as the former and Mrs. Cibber. The green-room was kept alive by their retorts, joyous by their repartees, or uncomfortable by their dissensions. But there were no two dramatic queens who hated each other so cordially within the theatre as Margaret and George Anne Bellamy. In rivalry or opposition on the stage, they entered into the full spirit of their parts, felt all or more than they said, and not only handled their daggers menacingly, but losing control of temper sometimes, used them more vigorously than law or good manners would allow.

After a career in London of undiminished popularity, she passed over to Dublin for three seasons,

1751–54, where she was equally the popular idol, drew thousands of pounds, had a salary, first of £400, then of £800 for the season, was enthroned at the Beef Steak Club by Sheridan, addressed verses, free enough to be what they were not—her own, to the Lord Lieutenant, and altogether ruled "the court, the camp, and the grove." Victor extols all her tragic parts, save Jane Shore; and Mrs. Delaney confirms his account of her Lady Townley, as being better than any the town had seen since Mrs. Oldfield's time; adding, that she pronounced well, and spoke sensibly; but that her voice was not agreeable, and that her arms were ungainly. Of her Maria ("Nonjuror"), Mrs. Delaney says that the effect in Dublin was marred by the immoderate size of Mrs. Woffington's hoops!

It was at this time she took a step which was sharply canvassed,—that of forsaking the church in which she was born, and putting her arm, as it were, under that of Protestantism. She went a long way, and in strange companionship too, in order to take this step. She and Sheridan made a pleasant excursion, on the occasion, through Mullingar to Longford and Carrick on Shannon, and on, by Lough Allen and Drumshamboe, till they stood on the verge of the Pot of the Shannon.

Murphy fancies that as Roman Catholics could not then legally wear a sword, she renounced her old faith that she might carry one, in male characters, without offending the law! This is sheer nonsense.[1]

[1] Murphy's statement is not made seriously; it is simply a joke.

But whatever took her to the little village on the mountain side, it is impossible to conceive a more striking contrast than the one between this magnificent district, where occasionally an eagle may be seen sweeping between Quilca and Sliev na Eirin, with Covent Garden or Smock Alley! I do not know if at that period, as till lately, the Primate of Ireland had a little shooting-box on a platform of the mountain, but to the modest residence still existing of the Protestant pastor, Sheridan and Margaret took their way; and there the brilliant lady enrolled herself as a member of the church by law established. The influences which moved her to this were simply that *she* would not lose her chance of an estate for the sake of the old religion in which she had been baptized. Her ex-admirer, Mac Swiney, had left her heiress to his estate of £200 a year; and that the bequest might be legal, and the succession uncontested, the frail Margaret qualified for prospective fortune by declaring herself a Protestant, in the presence of competent witnesses.

She returned to the "Garden" in the season 1754–55, going through all her best characters in that, and the two succeeding, and her final seasons. The last male part she acted was Lothario; the last original part she created was Lady Randolph (which, however, had been previously played in Edinburgh by Mrs. Ward), and in Rosalind, paralysis put an end to her professional career. Just previously, her Lothario had not been highly esteemed; and Barry, in the memorable suit of white puckered satin, had

produced all the effect in "Douglas." This affected her spirits. Then she was annoyed at young Tate Wilkinson, whom Foote had just brought on the stage, and who had audaciously imitated the worst parts of Margaret's voice. Almost the only unkind act that can be laid to Mrs. Woffington's charge, was her consequent attempt to induce Rich not to enter into an engagement with Wilkinson. Her scorn drove the unfortunate young gentleman, for his story was a sad one, from the green-room, despite the interference of Shuter. One night, as she was playing Clarissa in the "Confederacy," she saw Wilkinson in a stage-box with Captain Forbes, and unable to control her rage, she came close to the box, and absolutely made him shrink back by the sneering sarcasm with which she flung at him one of her speeches. A rude woman in the box above mimicked her peculiar voice so well, as Clarissa turned away, that Mrs. Woffington thought it came from Wilkinson. That night she swept through the green-room, a beautiful fury, and the next day, at Rich's levee, she assailed Tate with terrible eloquence, prophesied evil to him, wished the evil she prophesied, and altogether manifested little of the kindly nature which was, in truth, her own.

Soon followed thereon the fatal 3d of May 1757. The play was "As You Like It," in which she acted Rosalind. Young Tate Wilkinson was standing at the wing as she passed on to the stage, and on her way she complimented him, ironically, on his recent success as a debutant. Wilkinson watched and studied her throughout the piece, till she came off

early in the fifth act, and suddenly complained of being ill. Wilkinson offered his arm, leaning on which she retired to the green-room, rallied, went on, changed her dress, again trod the stage, defiantly of fate, and again yielded to the coming blow; but only for a moment. Once more she recovered, her self-will being so great, and she began the lines of the epilogue. She had just uttered, with fearful gaiety, the words:—"If I were among you, I'd kiss as many of you as had beards that pleased me——," when that once saucy tongue became paralysed. A last flash of courage impelled her to an attempt to proceed; but it was vain, and at the sense that she was stricken, she flung up her hands, uttered a wild shriek in abject terror, and staggering towards the stage door, fell into the arms stretched to receive her; and amid indescribable confusion of cheering and commiserating cries, Margaret Woffington disappeared from the stage, for ever.

In November of that year, a fine gentleman asked, "What has become of Mrs. Woffington?" "She has been taken off by Colonel Cæsar," answered another fine gentleman. "Reduced to *aut Cæsar aut nullus*," said the smart Lord Tyrawley. "She is gone to be married," said Kitty Clive; "Colonel Cæsar bought the license at the same time Colonel Mostyn bought his." At this time, poor Margaret, in the meridian of her beauty, somewhat weary of her calling, ashamed, it is said, of her life, was slowly dying at "Teddington, in Twickenhamshire," as Walpole loved to call it. So slowly, that the end did not come till 1760.

In the interval, Margaret Woffington is said to have lived to good purpose. Unreasonably exalted as her character has been, it is impossible to contemplate it at its close without respect. Charity, good works, sorrow for the past, hope,—all the Magdalen was there in that beautiful wreck. In a playful time she and Colonel Cæsar had agreed that the survivor of the two should be the heir of the other; but Margaret would not let a jest do injury to her family and to the poor. Of her few thousands, she left the greater part to her sister; her mother she had pensioned and protected; to the poor of Teddington, among whom she reposes, she left well-endowed almshouses. The poor, at least, may bless the memory of that once bright young creature, whom Madame Violante saw drawing water from the Liffey.

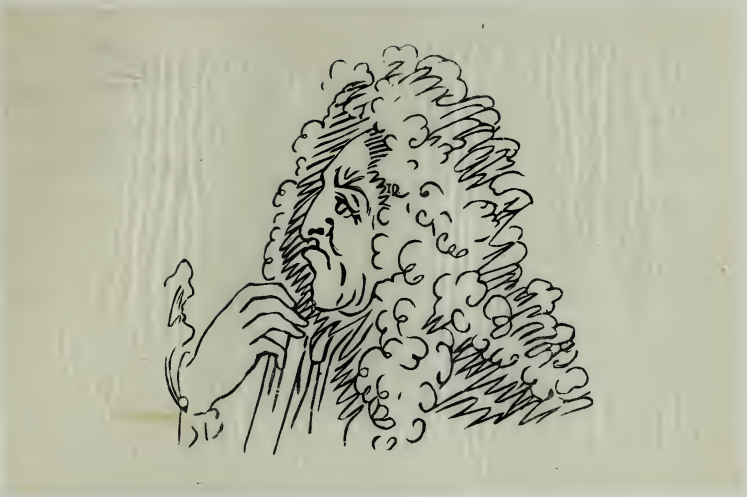
Those almshouses form a better relic of Margaret Woffington than the poor stage-jewels which her dresser, Mrs. Barrington, a respectable actress, hoped to inherit. These were claimed by, and surrendered to, the Hon. Mrs. Cholmondeley, and were carried to Ireland by that lady's daughter, on her marriage with Sir William Bellingham.

Such is the story of one, of whom an anonymous contemporary has written,—"Mrs. Woffington is a downright cheat, a triumphant plagiary. She first steals your heart, and then laughs at you as secure of your applause. There is such a prepossession arises from her form; such a witchcraft in her beauty, and to those who are personally acquainted with her, such an absolute command, from the sweetness of her

disposition, that it is almost impossible to criticise upon her." With this criticism, I leave Margaret Woffington to the tender judgment of all gentle readers.

But while Margaret Woffington is slowly dying, here is a funeral passing through Berkeley Square. "Mr. Colley Cibber" is the name often pronounced in the crowd. It is one of which we have, for some time, lost sight; let us return to it, before we pass on to that of other conspicuous men.

Mr. Powell as Lovewell.



THEOPHILUS CIBBER.
(Hogarth.)

CHAPTER XIII.

COLLEY CIBBER.

In the year 1671, the coffee-house politicians, the fine gentlemen, the scholars, and the gossips generally, were in no lack of themes for discussion. In Bow Street, the quidnuncs congratulated themselves, from April to December, at the resolution of the Commons, whose members had rebuked the Lords for daring to alter an impost laid on sugar, to the effect that in all aids given to the King by the Commons, the tax levied might be agreed to, but it could not be altered by the Lords. Knots of shabby-looking clergymen were constantly to be seen in Mr. Brent, the mercer's,

shop, discussing the arrangements just made for the sustenance of London incumbents, burnt out by the Great Fire. Upstairs, in the long-room over Mr. Brent's shop, the "wits' room" at Wills', the company never wearied of hearing Major Mohun, the actor, speak of Lord Fairfax who was just dead. There was much gossip, too, both there and about town, touching my Lord Manchester, lately deceased, the parliamentary general who had helped to restore monarchy. If he was the servant of two masters, some persons thought he had been sufficiently punished by being the husband of five wives. The critics were more genially engaged in canvassing the merits of Casaubon, the learned prebendary of Canterbury, who had recently laid aside his critical acumen with his mortal coil. The artists were canvassing the merits of a monument which was that year beginning to rear its head on Fish Street Hill. The architect was Sir Christopher Wren. A foreign sculptor from Holstein was, at that moment, preparing designs for the *basso relievo* now on the pedestal. This sculptor lived in Southampton Street, Bloomsbury, where, on the 6th of November 1671, while arranging the completion of his figures, his lady upstairs,—she was of a cavalier family, and had the blood of William of Wyckham in her veins,—presented him with a living figure, the counterfeit presentment of its father. The child thus born, as it were, with the London Monument, was named Colley Cibber.

How Colley fared at school, stood his own ground,

and was envied by the dunces he beat, in a double sense,—how he was determined to succeed in life, and *did* succeed, and was therefore denounced, as an ass or a knave, by those who failed, or who hated him for his success, or who feared the sarcasms which he himself delivered, without fear,—is known to us all.

The success of Colley Cibber, throughout life, may be ascribed to three circumstances; the acuteness with which he detected opportunity, the electric rapidity with which he seized it, and the marvellous unerring tact by which he turned it to profit. By this he was distinguished, despite some easy negligence and luxurious idleness, from his earliest days; and from his first to his last consequent triumph, he paid for each in the malevolence of those who envied him his victories and denied his merit.

When a lad at Grantham Free School, he alone accepted the magisterial proposal to compose a funeral oration, in honour of the dead king, Charles II. He gained such glory by his achievement that his fellows sent him to Coventry. For succeeding better than any of them in writing an ode in honour of the new King, an ode which he modestly owns to have been as execrable as anything he composed half a century later, when poet-laureate, they ostracised the bard whom they could not equal in song. Colley was satisfied with his glory, and treated his young adversaries with all the mingled good-nature and audacity with which he subsequently treated his better armed enemy, Mr. Pope.

When he "met the Revolution," in 1688, at Nottingham, failing to obtain military employment, he gladly availed himself of an opportunity to wait behind Lady Churchill's chair, as she sat at table with the Princess Anne. Half a hundred years later he refers to the friend he acquired by thus performing lacquey to her; and he happily caps a climax of glorious compliment to the then Duchess of Marlborough, by flatteringly alluding to something that pleasantly distinguished her above all the women of her time,—a distinction which she received not from earthly sovereigns, but "from the Author of Nature;" that of being "*a great grandmother without grey hairs.*"

He failed, indeed, in obtaining a commission, as he did in an attempt to enter the Church; but for those failures Cibber was, in no wise, responsible. Had he grasped a pair of colours we should have heard of him, honourably, in Flanders. Had he received ordination, he would at least have as well known how to push his way as the reverend Philip Bisse, who kissed the Countess of Plymouth in the dark, affecting to take her for a maid of honour, and who thereby gained that lively widow for a wife, and through her the bishoprics, successively, of St. Davids and Hereford.

Colley being alike debarred from ascending the pulpit, or leading to the imminently deadly breach, turned to the sock and buskin, alternately donning the one or the other, for nothing; but watching his opportunity, and never failing to take advantage of

it. He gladly, after a term of hungry probation, accepted the little part of the Chaplain, in the "Orphan;" and when the old comedian Goodman swore there was the stuff for the making of a good actor in the young fellow, the tears came into Cibber's eyes; but they were tears of joy, for he recognised that his good time had commenced, and he watched opportunity more indefatigably than ever.

Meanwhile he was happy on ten, and fifteen shillings a week, with food, and raiment, and lodging, under his father's roof, and an ardent desire that he might one day play lover to Mrs. Bracegirdle. When the ambitious young fellow had induced his sire to allow him £20 a year, in addition to the £1 a week which he then gained on the stage, Colley made love to a young lady off the stage, and married at the age of twenty-two. He and his wife were as happy as any young couple that ever took a leap in the dark. This is his own testimony; but beyond that darkness he looked eagerly, watching still for opportunity. It came when Congreve's "Double Dealer" was to be played before Queen Mary. Kynaston had fallen suddenly ill, and who could learn and play the part of Lord Touchwood in a few hours? Congreve looks at Cibber, and the young actor looks confidently at Congreve. He undertakes the task, fired by the thought of promotion, and of performing before a crowned head. His success was perfect. Congreve was delighted, and the salary of the ecstatic comedian was raised some few shillings a week. His young wife danced round him for joy

at this glimpse of Golconda. The company of actors began to dislike him, after the fashion of his Grantham schoolfellows.

Little recked Colley Cibber what men thought of him, provided only the thought helped him towards fortune. At a pinch, he supplied a new prologue, for the opening of a season at Drury Lane, the prosperity of which was menaced by an opposition from the new theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields. The poet begged hard that he might have the speaking of his own piece, but he was not accounted actor good enough for that, and thus he lost, not by error of his own, a particular opportunity. But the master slipped a couple of guineas into his hand, and declared that he, Colley, "was a very ingenious young man." Cibber was consoled; he had, at all events, profited by the opportunity, of making way with his "Master." To be sure, said Colley, "he knows no difference between Dryden and Durfey;" but that also made no difference to Colley.

Some weeks subsequently the "Old Batchelor" was suddenly substituted for the previously announced tragedy of "Hamlet." When all the parts had been distributed to the principal actors, Cibber, ever vigilant and ever ready, quietly remarked that they had forgotten one of the most telling parts in the whole play, Fondlewife. It was Dogget's great part. In it he was unapproachable. He was not a member of the company. Who could or would dare to face a public whose sides were still shaking with laughter at Dogget's irresistible performance of this character?

No one knew the part; midday was at hand; the curtain must go up by four; the play could *not* be changed. What *was* to be done? Colley, of course, offered himself to do it, and his offer was treated with contempt;[1] but the managers were compelled to accept it. Here was a golden chance which had golden results for Cibber. He played the part at night, in dress, feature, voice, and action, so like to the incomparable Dogget himself, that the house was in an uproar of delight and perplexity, —delight at beholding their favourite, and perplexity as to how it could possibly be he. For there sat Dogget himself, in the very centre of a forward row in the pit; a stimulant rather than a stumbling-block to Cibber; and the astonished witness of the newly-acquired glory of this young actor, who always seemed ready to undertake anything, and who was always sure of accomplishing whatever he undertook. "It would be too rank an affectation," he writes, "if I should not confess that to see him there, a witness of my reception, was to me as consummate a triumph as the heart of vanity could be indulged with."

Surely, this persevering fellow merited success; but still were his playfellows like his schoolfellows. They envied and decried him. If he solicited a part, he was put by, with the remark that *it was not in his way*. He wisely replied that any part, naturally written, should be in the way of every man who pre-

[1] Cibber did not offer to do it; he was indeed rather forced into the part. His own words are :—"I durst not refuse."

tended to be an actor. The managers thought otherwise, and left Colley—but not to despair. He had just discerned another opportunity, and, *more suo*, he clutched it, worked it to a noble end, and with it achieved a double and a permanent triumph—triumph as author as well as actor.

For many years there had not been a comedy written but at the expense of husbands. They were the dupes and dolts of the piece; were betrayed and dishonoured; cudgelled and contented in their abject debasement. Audiences had had something too much of this, and Cibber was the first to perceive it. He himself was not yet sufficiently enlightened to discover that the majority in all theatrical audiences were gasping for a general purer air of refinement, and were growing disgusted with the mire in which such writers as Ravenscroft, and others with more wit than he, plunged and dragged them. Cibber, at all events, made the first step out of this slough, by producing his "Love's Last Shift." It was not readily accepted, but it forced its way to that consummation, by the testimony borne to its merits by competent judges. It was played in January 1695.[1] Its grossness is scarcely inferior to that of comedies most offending in this way, and which were produced both earlier and later. Nevertheless, it marks an epoch. There was no comically outraged husband in it. The style is still that of the old, free, coarse-comedy, in all the other persons of the drama. The women lack heart and natural affection; the men are unrefined

[1] January 1695–96; that is, 1696.

and uncivil, and both converse too much after the intolerable mode which was not yet to be driven from the sadly-abused stage. Sentiment there is, indeed, after a sort; but when it is not smart and epigrammatic, it is repulsively low and selfish. Amid the intrigues of the piece, there stands glitteringly prominent the first of the brilliant series of Cibber's fops, Sir Novelty Fashion. This character he wrote for his own acting, and his success in it established him as an actor of the first rank. The interest of the audience in Sir Novelty does not centre in him as an unprincipled rake (he is, however, sufficiently unscrupulous), as it is attracted towards him as a "beau," a man of fashion, who professes to see nothing tolerable in himself, solely in order to extort praise for his magnificence from others. He is "ugly, by Gad!" he is a "sloven!" If he wears hundreds of yards of trimming, it is to encourage the poor ribband-weavers. If all the eminent tailors in town besiege his house, it is to petition him for the pattern of his new coat. He is the first man who was ever called "*beau*," which title he professes to prefer to "right honourable," for the latter is inherited, while the former is owing to his surprising mien and unexampled gallantry. He does not make love to a lady; his court is paid by indicating to her why she should love *him*. He judges of a man of sense by the fashion of his peruke; and if he enters a lady's apartment in an unpowdered periwig, she may rest assured that he has no designs on her admiration. Sir Novelty is one of those fine gentlemen who go to

both theatres on the same evening; he sits with his back to the stage, and is assured that he looks like a gentleman; for, is he not endowed with a "fertile genius for dress?"

Southerne, who had read this play and liked it, was fearful of Cibber's own part in it. "Young man," said he, "I pronounce thy play a good one. I will answer for its success, if thou dost not spoil it by thine own action!" When the play was over, Nell Gwyn's old friend, Sackville, now Earl of Dorset, Lord Chamberlain, and the "best good man with the worst-natured muse," declared that "Love's Last Shift" was the best first play that any author, in his memory, had produced; and that for a young fellow to show himself such an actor, and such a writer, in one day, was something extraordinary. Colley, always modest, but not through vanity, nicely alludes to Dorset's known good-nature, and sets down the compliment not to his deserts, but to Dorset's wish to "encourage a young beginner." Cibber himself pronounced his comedy puerile and frothy.

It is due to Cibber to say that in this piece his own part of Sir Novelty is never so prominent as to interfere unfairly with the other personages. The piece itself, gross as it is, had a tendency towards reforming the stage. Cibber's self-imposed mission in this direction was consummated when he produced his "Careless Husband." This was one of two works of Colley which Walpole pronounced to be worthy of immortality. The other was the "Apology" for his life. The progress towards purity, made

between Cibber's first comedy and the last I have named above, is nothing less than marvellous. In the "Careless Husband" he produced a piece at which the most fastidious ladies of *those* times might sit, and listen to, unmasked. I say "listen," for the comedy is a merely conversational piece, sparkling with wit, and with fewer lines to shock the purer sense than many an old play which still retains a place upon the stage. The descriptions here are as clever as the dialogue is spirited. If evil things come under notice, they are treated as people of decency would treat them, often gracefully, never alluringly. The incidents, told rather than acted, are painted, if I may so speak, with the consummate skill, ease, and distinctiveness of a most accomplished artist. The finest gentlemen are less vicious here than they are temporarily foolish; and one has not been long acquainted with Lady Easy before the discovery is made that she is the first pure and sensible woman that has been represented in a comedy since a world of time. There is good honest love, human weaknesses, and noble triumphs over them, in this piece. If Mr. Pope sneered at the author as a "dunce," which he was not, Mr. Pope's neighbour, Horace Walpole, has registered him rightly as a "gentleman," and traced his great success in describing gentlemen to the circumstance of his constant and familiar intercourse with that portion of "society."

In this piece, there is the most perfect of Cibber's beaux, written for his own acting; and it is to be ob-

served, that as time progressed and fashion changed, so did he observe the progress, and in his costume illustrate the change. Lord Foppington is a different man from Sir Novelty Fashion; my lord *does* make love to a lady. With a respectful leer, he stares full in her face, draws up his breath, and cries, "Gad, you're handsome!" He is married, too, and has just sufficient regard for his wife to wish himself sunburnt if he does not prefer her to his estate. He talks French enough to cite an *à la* what d'ye call it; has Horace enough at his memory's ends to show his breeding, by an apt quotation; and evidences his gentlemanly feeling, albeit a *fine*-gentlemanly feeling, on witnessing the happy union of the two wayward lovers,—Lord Morelove and Lady Betty Modish,—by the very characteristic exclamation:—"Stap my breath, if ever I was better pleased since my first entrance into human nature!"

The example of comparative purity, set in this piece, was not immediately followed; but for that, Cibber is not to blame. The "Careless Husband" was produced in 1704, and nearly seventy years elapsed before the period when Garrick positively refused to pollute the boards of Drury Lane, by reproducing thereon, on Lord Mayors' Days, one of the most filthy of the filthy plays of Ravenscroft.[1] The critics of Cibber's time were unreasonable. Because he was sometimes an adapter, they called him an adapter always; and the reviewers, sick, sorry, nay maddened at his success,

[1] "The London Cuckolds" ceased to be an institution on Lord Mayor's Day within fifty years of this time.

declared of his most original comedy, that it was "not his own." But they never had the wit to discover whence he had stolen it.

He took the adverse criticism with philosophy and good-humour,—as he took most things. By the last, he once saved ten shillings a week of his salary. Rich announced the intended reduction to him, with the remark, that even then he would have as much as Goodman ever had,—whose highest salary was forty shillings a week. "Aye!" said Cibber, laughing, "and Goodman was forced to go on the highway, to help him to live!" To save Colley from the same desperate course, Rich made no reduction in his salary.

We obtain from Croker's *Boswell*, an instance of Cibber's care in perfecting a piece, and his readiness in adapting passing incidents to suit his purpose. Mrs. Brett, the divorced Countess of Macclesfield, and long thought to be the mother of Savage, the poet, was the second wife of that Colonel Brett, whose opinion as to what would best please the town was eagerly sought after by authors and actors. His first wife, a great leader of fashion, had taken the handsome fellow from the hands of bailiffs, married him, and ultimately left him a wealthy widower. For the taste and judgment of the second Mrs. Brett, Cibber had the highest respect; and he consulted her on every scene of the "Careless Husband," as he wrote it. At some one of these consultations, he probably heard of the too great civility of the Colonel to his wife's maid, both of whom Mrs. Brett once found fast asleep in two chairs. The lady was satisfied to leave token of

her presence, by casting her lace handkerchief over her husband's neck. Of the otherwise painful incident she never took any notice; and let us hope that the Colonel profited by the silent rebuke, as Sir Charles Easy did. However this may be, Cibber incorporated the incident into his play, where it heightens the interest of one of the most interesting scenes.

Cibber was essentially a comic actor. His Richard partook very much of the manner of his Sir Novelty Fashion; and his "A horse! a horse!" used to excite the hilarity of his audience. He avows, gracefully enough, that his want of a strong and full voice soon cut short his hopes of making any figure in tragedy. He adds, with some conceit, and more affected modesty, "I have been many years since convinced, that whatever opinion I might have of my own judgment or capacity to amend the palpable errors that I saw our tragedians most in favour to commit, yet the auditors who would have been sensible of such amendments (could I have made them) were so very few, that my best endeavour would have been but an unavailing labour, or what is yet worse, might have appeared, both to our actors and to many auditors, the vain mistake of my own self-conceit; for so strong, so very near indispensable, is that one article of voice, in the forming of a good tragedian, that an actor may want any other qualification whatsoever, and yet will have a better chance for applause than he will ever have, with all the skill in the world, if his voice is not equal to it." Colley admirably ex-

plains this, by adding, . . . "I say, for *applause* only; but applause does not always stay for, nor always follow, intrinsic merit. Applause will frequently open, like a young hound upon a wrong scent; and the majority of auditors, you know, are generally composed of babblers, that are profuse of their voices, before there is anything on foot that calls for them. Not but, I grant, to lead, *or mislead, the many*, will always stand in some rank of a necessary merit; yet, when I say a good tragedian, I mean one, in opinion of whose real merit the best judges would agree."

Cibber is so perfect as a critic, he so thoroughly understands the office and so intelligibly conveys his opinions, that it were well if all gentlemen who may hereafter aspire to exercise the critical art, were compelled to study his *Apology* as medical students are to become acquainted with their *Celsus*. No one should be admitted to practise theatrical criticism who has not got by *heart* Cibber's descriptions of Betterton and Mrs. Oldfield; or who fail on their being examined as to their proficiency in the *Canons of Colley*.

Then, if there be one circumstance more than another for which Cibber merits our affectionate regard, it is for the kindly nature with which he tempers justice, and the royal generosity which he displays in attributing certain alleged excellences in his own acting, to his careful study of the acting of others. If Cibber played Sparkish and Sir Courtly Nice with applause, it was entirely owing, so he nobly avows, to the ideas and impressions he had

received from Mountfort's acting of those characters. Although his Richard was full of defects, yet he attracted the town by it. He assigns this attraction to the fact of his attempting to reproduce the style and method of one of the greatest of Richards,—Sandford.[1]

While praising others he is ever ready to disparage himself; and he as heartily ridicules his insufficient voice, his meagre person, and his pallid complexion, as any enemy might have done for him. He exalts the spirit, ease, and readiness of Vanbrugh, and denounces the puerility and frothy stage-language of his own earlier dramas, accepting heartily Congreve's judgment on "Love's Last Shift," which "had in it a great many things that were like wit, that in reality were *not* wit." He courageously pronounces the condemnation of his "Love in a Riddle," to be the just judgment of an enlightened audience. In the casting of a play, Colley was contented to take any part left to him, after the other great men had picked, chosen, rejected, and settled for themselves; and a couple of subordinate characters in the "Pilgrim" were as readily undertaken by him and as carefully acted as his Richard, Sir Francis, or Master Slender.

To his own alteration of Shakspeare's "Richard III.," he alludes with some diffidence. There is no

[1] There is every reason to believe that Sandford never played Richard; and, indeed, the play does not seem to have been produced once during his career. Cibber says he founded his playing on the general style of Sandford, trying to act as he thought Sandford would have done.

trace of self-complacency in his remarks. Colley's adversaries, however, have denounced him for this act as virulently as if he had committed a great social crime. But whatever may be said as to our old friend's "mangling of Shakspeare," the piece which he so mangled has ever since kept the stage, and it is Cibber's and not Shakspeare's "Richard" which is acted by many of our chief players, who have the coolness, at the same time, to protest that their reverence for Shakspeare's text is a pure homage rendered to a divine inspiration.

There were actors of Cibber's days who disliked to play villains like Richard, lest the audience should mistake the counterfeit for the real character. But if people thought Cibber vicious because he played a vicious fellow to the life, he took it as a compliment. His voice was certainly too weak and piping for tragedy, but as he philosophically remarks, "If the multitude were not in a roar, to see me in Cardinal Wolsey, I could be sure of them in Alderman Fondlewife. If they hated me in Iago, in Sir Fopling they took me for a fine gentleman. If they were silent at Syphax, no Italian Eunuch was more applauded than I when I sung in Sir Courtly. If the morals of Æsop were too grave for them, Justice Shallow was as simple and as merry an old rake as the wisest of our young ones could wish me."

Cibber had a fine perception of the good and the true. That the "Beggar's Opera" should beat "Cato" by a run of forty nights does not induce

him to believe that any man would be less willing to be accounted the author of the tragedy than of the opera, the writer of which, he says with some humour, "I knew to be an honest, good-natured man, and who, when he had descended to write more like one in the cause of virtue, had been as unfortunate as others of that class."

Colley had quite as just a perception of the different value of fair and unfair criticism. Of theatrical criticism, in the proper sense of the word, there was, in those days, none. But this lack of effective criticism was not caused by incapacity for the task on the part of writers; as may be seen in the admirable critical sketches in Cibber's "Life." Indeed, the capability existed from a remote period, —a fact acknowledged by those who have read Sir Thomas Overbury's finished summary of the character of an "Actor."

In place of criticism, however, there was a system of assault by the means of unfounded reports. *Mist's Journal* was foremost in attacking Cibber and his colleagues, but "they hardly ever hit upon what was *really* wrong in us," says Colley, who took these would-be damaging paragraphs, founded upon hearsay, with perfect indifference. Wilks and Booth were much more sensitive, and preferred that public answer should be made; but Cibber, secure, perhaps too secure, he says, in his contempt for such writers, would not consent to this. "I know of but one way to silence authors of that stamp," he says, "which was, to grow insignificant and good for nothing, and

then we should hear no more of them. But while we continued in the prosperity of pleasing others, and were not conscious of having deserved what they said of us, why should we gratify the little spleen of our enemies, by wincing to it, or give them fresh opportunities to dine upon any reply they might make to our publicly taking notice of them?"

Cibber cared not for *Mist's Journal* while such a man as Sheffield, Duke of Buckingham, made a friend of him. To this Duke, a dull Earl once expressed his opinion that Mr. Cibber was not sufficiently "good company" for his grace. "He is good enough for me," said the Duke; "but I can believe that he would not suit *you*." A peer who, at least, had wit enough to enjoy Quin's society, had the ill-manners to say, "What a pity it is, Mr. Quin, you are an actor!" "Why," said ever-ready James, "what would you have me be?—A lord?" Cibber, like Quin, was proud of his vocation. Colley originated nearly eighty characters during his career, from 1691 to his retirement in 1733. Among them are the grand old fops, the crafty or the inane old men, the dashing soldier, and the impudent lacquey. In tragedy, he was nearly always wrong. Of middle size, fair complexion, and with a shrill voice, apt to crack, and therefore to make him ridiculous in serious parts, he was, of "shape, a little clumsy," says one sketcher of his character,—while "his shape was finely proportioned," is the account of a second. Mr. Urban says that when Cibber had to represent ridiculous humour, there was a mouth in every nerve,

and he was eloquent, though mute. "His attitudes were pointed and exquisite; his expression was stronger than painting; he was beautifully absorbed by the character, and demanded and monopolised attention; his very extravagances were coloured with propriety." That the public highly appreciated him is clear from the enthusiasm with which they hailed his occasional returns to the stage, between 1733 and 1745, when he finally withdrew, after acting Pandulph in his "Papal Tyranny." His Shallow, in those occasional days, was especially popular. "His transition from asking the price of ewes, to trite but grave reflections on mortality, was so natural, and attended by such an unmeaning roll of his small pigs'-eyes, that perhaps no actor was ever superior in the conception and execution of such solemn insignificancy."

The general idea of Cibber has been fixed by the abuse and slander of Pope. In the dissensions of these two men, Cibber had the advantage of an adversary who keeps his temper while he sharpens his wit, and maintains self-respect while courteously crushing his opponent;[1] but even Pope, who so hated Cibber, could praise the "Careless Husband;" and a man, lauded by Pope, who detested him; by Walpole, who despised players; and by Johnson, who approved of his "Apology," must have been superior to many of his contemporaries. He wrote the best

[1] Cibber certainly kept his temper, but he can hardly be said to have been specially courteous, when his most powerful weapon was a story of Pope's misadventure in a house of ill-fame.

comedy of his time, was the only adapter of Shakspeare's plays whose adaptation survives—to show his superiority, if not over the original poet, at least over all other adapters; and of all borrowers from the French, not one reaped such honour and profit as he did by his "Nonjuror," which also still lives in "The Hypocrite." Of all English managers, he was the most successful and prosperous — only to be approached in later days by Garrick. Of all English actors, he is the only one who was ever promoted to the laureateship, or elected a member of White's Club. None laughed louder than he did at the promotion, or at those friends of his to whom it gave unmixed dissatisfaction. If a sarcasm was launched at him from the stage, on this account, he was the first to recognise it, by his hilarity, in the boxes. Further, when necessity compelled him to plead in person in a suit at the bar, his promptitude, eloquence, and modest bearing, crowned by success, demonstrated what he might have accomplished, had he been destined to wear the wig and gown. To sum up all—after more than forty years of labour, not unmixed by domestic troubles, he retired, with an ample fortune, to enjoy which he had nearly a quarter of a century before him. Such a man was sure to be both hated and envied—though only by a few.

Of Cibber's being elected to White's Club House, Davies sneeringly remarks:—"And so, I suppose, might any man be who wore good clothes, and paid his money when he lost it. He fared most sumptuously with Mr. Arthur (the proprietor) and his wife,

and gave a trifle for his dinner. After he had dined, when the club-room door was opened, and the laureate was introduced, he was saluted with the loud and joyous acclamation of, 'Oh, King Coll! come in, King Coll! Welcome, King Colley!' And this kind of gratulation," adds Davies, "Mr. Victor thought was very gracious and very honourable!" Considering the time, about 1733, such a greeting had nothing offensive in it. If there had been, Cibber was just the man to resent it, at the sore cost of the offender, whether the latter were Chesterfield or Devonshire, Cholmondeley or Rockingham, Sir John Cope, Mrs. Oldfield's General Churchill, or, the last man likely to be so audacious—Bubb Doddington himself.

Among them all, Colley kept his own to the last. A short time before that last hour arrived, Horace Walpole hailed him, on his birthday, with a good morrow, and "I am glad, sir, to see you looking so well." "Egad, sir," replied the old gentleman—all diamonded, and powdered, and dandified, "at eighty-four, it's well for a man that he can look at all." Therein lay one point of Cibber's character,—the making the best of circumstances.

And now he crosses Piccadilly, and passes through Albemarle Street, slowly, but cheerfully, with an eye and a salutation for any pretty woman of his acquaintance, and a word for any "good fellow" whose purse he has lightened or who has lightened his, at dice or whist. And so he turns into the adjacent square, and as his servant closes the door, after admitting

him, neither of them wots that the master has passed over the threshold for the last time a living man.

In December 1757 I read in contemporary publications that there "died at his house at Berkeley Square, Colley Cibber, Esq., Poet Laureate." The year of his death was as eventful as that of his birth. In its course Byng was shot, and Calmet died; the Duke of Newcastle became Prime Minister, Clive won the battle of Plassy, and the Duke of Cumberland surrendered Hanover and a confederate army to the French by the treaty of Closter-seven. Within Cibber's era the Stuart had gone, Nassau had been, and the House of Brunswick had succeeded. This house was never more unpopular than at the time of Cibber's death, for one of its sons had permanently tarnished his military fame; but great as the public indignation was at the convention of Closter-seven, there was a large fraction of the London population, at least, who ceased to think of it, while Colley Cibber was carried to sleep with kings and heroes in Westminster Abbey. The general conclusion arrived at seems to have been that he was a well-abused man, who would speedily be forgotten.

To this, it may be replied, that in spite of the abuse, often little merited, he was an eminently successful man throughout life; and accomplished a career, achieved (and scattered) a fortune, and built up a fame which will always render him an object of interest.

A little too careless, perhaps; rather too much given to gambling and philandering; somewhat more

than might be of the young beau about him, even in his old days, when, however, he was happy and resigned under a burthen of years which few men bear with content or resignation.

At the period of Colley Cibber's death, his daughter-in-law, Mrs. Susanna Cibber, was enchanting the town with her Isabella played to Garrick's Biron; and Barry and Mrs. Bellamy were raising melodious echoes within the walls of Covent Garden. His son, Theophilus Cibber, was hanging about the town without an engagement and in a fine suit of clothes. Colley had once thus seen him, and had saluted him with a contemptuous "I pity you!" "You had better pity my tailor!" said the son, who was then challenging Garrick to play with him the same parts alternately! Then, while the body of the Poet Laureate was being carried to Westminster Abbey, there was, up away in a hut in then desolate Clerkenwell, and starving, Colley's own daughter, Charlotte Charke. Seven and twenty years before she had first come upon the stage, after a stormy girlhood, and something akin to insanity strongly upon her. Her abilities were fair, her opportunities great, but her temper rendered both unavailable. She appears to have had a mania for appearing in male characters on, and in male attire off, the stage. By some terrible offence she forfeited the recognition of her father, who was otherwise of a benevolent disposition; and friendless, she fought a series of battles with the world, and came off in all more and more damaged.

She starved with strollers, failed as a grocer in Long

Acre, became bankrupt as a puppet-show proprietor in James Street, Haymarket; re-married, became a widow a second time, was plunged into deeper ruin, thrown into prison for debt, and released only by the subscriptions of the lowest, but not least charitable, sisterhood of Drury Lane. Assuming male attire, she hung about the theatres for casual hire, went on the tramp with itinerants, hungered daily, and was weekly cheated, but yet kept up such an appearance that an heiress fell in love with her, who was reduced to despair when Charlotte Charke revealed her story, and abandoned the place.

Her next post was that of valet to an Irish Lord, forfeiting which, she and her child became sausage-makers, but could not obtain a living; and then Charlotte Charke cried "Coming, coming, sir!" as a waiter at the King's Head Tavern, Mary-le-Bone. Thence she was drawn by an offer to make her manager of a company of strolling players, with whom she enjoyed more appetite than means to appease it. She endured sharp distress, again and again; but was relieved by an uncle, who furnished her with funds, with which she opened a tavern in Drury Lane, where, after a brief career of success, she again became bankrupt. To the regular stage she once more returned, under her brother Theophilus, at the Haymarket; but the Lord Chamberlain closed the house, and Charlotte Charke took to working the wires of Russell's famous puppets in the Great Room, still existing in Brewer Street. There was a gleam of good fortune for her; but it soon faded away, and then for nine wretched

years this clever, but most wretched of women, struggled frantically for bare existence, among the most wretched of strollers, with whom she endured unmitigated misery.

And yet Cibber's erring and hapless daughter contrived to reach London, where, in 1755, she published her remarkable autobiography, the details of which make the heart ache, in spite of the small sympathy of the reader for this half-mad creature. On the profits of this book she was enabled to open, as *Landlord*, a tavern at Islington; but, of course, ruin ensued; and in a hut, amid the cinder heaps and worse refuse in the desolate fields, she found a refuge, and even wrote a novel, on a pair of bellows in her lap, by way of desk! Here she lived, with a squalid handmaiden, a cat, dog, magpie, and monkey. Humbled, disconsolate, abandoned, she readily accepted from a publisher who visited her, £10 for her manuscript. This was at the close of the year 1755, and I do not meet with her again till 1759, two years after her father's death, when she played Marplot, in the "Busy Body," for her own benefit, at the Haymarket, with this advertisement:—"As I am entirely dependent on chance for a subsistence, and desirous of settling into business, I humbly hope the town will favour me on the occasion, which, added to the rest of their indulgences, will be ever gratefully acknowledged by their truly obliged and obedient servant, Charlotte Charke."

She died on the 6th of April 1760. Her father was then sleeping in Westminster Abbey; her brother Theophilus was at the bottom of the Irish

Sea, with a shipful of Irish peers, English players, pantomimists, and wire-dancers: and her sister-in-law, Susanna Cibber, was playing Juliet to Garrick's Romeo, and approaching the time when she was to be carried to Westminster also.

Cibber had other daughters besides that audacious Charlotte, who is said to have once given imitations of her father on the stage; to have presented a pistol at, and robbed him on the highway; and to have smacked his face with a pair of soles out of her own basket. Again may it be said, happy are the women who have no histories! Let us part kindly with this poor woman's father—a man who had many virtues, and whose vices were the fashions of his time. Of him, a writer has sarcastically remarked, that he praised only the dead, and was for ever attacking his contemporaries! He who refrained from evil-speaking against those who could no longer defend themselves, and who flung the shafts of his wit and satire only at those who had tongues wherewith to reply, was in that much a true and honest fellow. "Mr. Cibber, I take my leave of you with some respect!" It is none the less for the satire of the "Craftsman," who ordered the players to go into mourning for the defunct manager; the actresses to wear black capuchins, and the men of the company "dirty shirts!"

DUBLIN THEATRE ROYAL.

CHAPTER XIV.

ENGLAND AND IRELAND.

The season of 1757–58 was the last of the series during which Barry opposed Garrick. At the close of it, Spranger proceeded to Dublin, taking with him, from Drury Lane, versatile Woodward, to retain whom Garrick would not increase his salary.

At Drury, Garrick brought out Home's "Agis," with a cast including himself, Mossop, and Mrs. Cibber; Mrs. Pritchard, and Mrs. Yates! The piece failed notwithstanding.[1] Walpole would not praise it, and the angry author would never speak, or even

[1] It was played eleven times.

bow to him, afterwards. Gray compared this piece to an antique statue which Home had painted white and red, and dressed in a negligée, made by a York mantua-maker! Other critics found in "Agis," Charles I. treacherously dealt with by the Scots, whereby the author had intended to punish his nation for its bigotry with regard to the drama generally, and "Douglas" in particular. Walpole added that Home was a goose for writing a second tragedy at all, after having succeeded so well with the first. It was unfortunate for this critic that "Agis" was written *before* "Douglas," though it followed in succession of representation.

Murphy, who had been a student at St. Omer's, a clerk in a city bank, an unsuccessful actor, and a political writer; who, moreover, was refused a call to the bar by the benchers of the Temple and Gray's Inn, on the ground of his having been a player! but who was admitted by the less bigoted benchers of Lincoln's Inn,—feeling his way towards comedy illustrative of character, by farces descriptive of foibles, very humorously satirised the quidnuncs who then abounded, in his "Upholsterer, or What Next?" in which Garrick acted Pamphlet, as carefully as he did Ranger or King Lear.

But Garrick's chief concern was to replace Woodward, and in this he as nearly succeeded as he could expect, by engaging an Irish actor, O'Brien, who, in the early part of 1758–59 made his appearance as Captain Brazen, and, by the graceful way in which he drew his sword, charmed all who were not aware

that his father was a fencing-master. He exulted in light comedy and young tragic lovers, for half-a-dozen years, after which he became the hero of a romance in life, and began to be ashamed of his calling.

The great incident of the season was the acting of Antony, by Garrick, to the Cleopatra of Mrs. Yates, but they gained even more laurels as Zamti and Mandane in the "Orphan of China," a tragedy, wherein small matters are handled in a transcendental style. But Mandane lifted Mrs. Yates to an equality with Mrs. Cibber; and Walpole, who spoke of Murphy, sneeringly, as a "writing actor," did him the justice to add that he was "very good company."

Then, Foote played Shylock! Wilkinson delighted everybody by his imitations, save the actors whom he mimicked, and Garrick took the "Pupille" of the Gallo-Irish Fagan, and polished it into the pretty little comedietta, the "Guardian," in which his Heartly showed what a man of genius could make of so small a part. Mozeen, who had left the law for the stage, found a bright opportunity for Miss Barton in his "Heiress;" and Dr. Hill showed the asinine side of his character by describing his farce of the "Rout" as by "a person of honour!"—

> "For physic and farces, his equal there scarce is;
> His farces are physic, his physic a farce is!"

So wrote Garrick of Hill, who was a clever man, but one who lacked tact and judgment, and got buffeted by men who had not a tithe of his zeal and industry. His chief defect lay in his intolerable conceit.

Dodsley's "Cleone," rejected by Garrick, became the distinction of the Covent Garden season of 1758–59. Ross played Sifroy, and Mrs. Bellamy the heroine. As a counter-attraction, Garrick essayed Marplot, in vain. "Cleone" is a romantic tragedy. The time is that of the Saracenic invasion of the south of France, and the story bears close resemblance to the legend of St. Genevieve, where a faithful young wife and mother suffers under unmerited charges of treason to her absent husband and her home. The author extended his drama from three acts to five, at the suggestion of Pope. Dr. Johnson subsequently looked upon it as the noblest effort made since the time of Otway! and Lord Chesterfield contributed advice which shows that stage-French was not of the best quality in those days. "You should instruct the actors," he said, "not to mouth out the *oy* in the name of Sifroy as though they were crying *oysters*." "People," writes Gray to Mason, "who depised 'Cleone' in manuscript, went to see it, and confess '*they cried so!*'" Dodsley, after some flatness, "piled the agony" skilfully, and Mrs. Bellamy made hearts ache and eyes weep, for many successive glorious and melancholy nights.

The stage lost Mrs. Macklin this year, such an "old woman" as it was not to see again till the period of Mrs. Davenport. In October 1759,[1] too, Theophilus Cibber satisfied people that he was not born to be hanged. With Lord Drogheda and his

[1] Should be October 1758.

son, Harlequin Mattocks,[1] Miss Wilkinson the wire-dancer, and a shipload of frippery, he was crossing the Irish Sea from Parkgate to Dublin, when the vessel was caught in a gale, and went down with all on board. Such was the end of a fair player and a sad rogue. Somewhere off the Scottish coast, whither the ship had been blown, perished Ancient Pistol, and the original George Barnwell. His sire, wife, and sister bore the calamity which had fallen upon him with philosophical equanimity.

On the retirement of Barry from London, Garrick travelled abroad, for a year, to recruit his health.[2] All the intervening time, till Barry returned, has the appearance of a season of truce. No great tragic actor arose to seize the wreath of either of the absent tragedians, though the town was seduced from its respective allegiances, for a moment, by the advent and bright promise of young Powell; and Walpole was eager to recognise a greater than Garrick in the aspiring city clerk.

Walpole was accustomed to describe Garrick as a mere machine, in whom the power to express Shakspeare's words with propriety, was absurdly held to be a merit! "On the night of Powell's first appearance, the audience," says Walpole, "not content with clapping, stood up and shouted." Walpole adds, that Powell had been clerk to Sir Robert Ladbroke, and "so clever in business, that his

[1] Should be Maddox. Mattocks was a singer and actor.

[2] I presume Dr. Doran does not mean that Garrick went abroad immediately on Barry's departure. Barry went to Ireland in 1758; Garrick did not travel till 1763.

master would have taken him in as a partner; but he had an impulse for the stage. His figure is fine, and voice most sonorous, as they say, but I wait for the rebound of his fame, and till I can get in, but at present all the boxes are taken for a month." Walpole suppresses the fact that Garrick had not only selected Powell as his substitute, in his absence, but had carefully instructed him in the part of Philaster, and thereby helped him to the triumphant position which the younger actor, then twenty-eight years of age, held during the first of his few seasons, from 1763 to 1768, the year of poor Powell's death.

No new tragic poet of eminence now arose, nor did any old one increase his reputation. Home is supposed to have been thinking of the siege of Berwick when, in his "Siege of Aquileia," he pourtrayed our Edward under the figure of Maximin. Brooke's boasted purity of language and sentiment in *his* "Earl of Essex" was playfully crushed by Johnson. "Who rules o'er freemen should himself be free," was a line cited for its beauty, by Sheridan, the actor. "Who drives fat oxen should himself be fat," was the stupid comment of the lexicographer.

Farce flourished within this period,—supplied by the Rev. Mr. Townley, Garrick, Foote, Colman, and Murphy, the last of whom increased his fame by such comedies as the bustling, and yet monotonously bustling, "All in the Wrong," and the "Way to Keep Him." The authors of this period sought to correct faults and not to laugh at them. This, perhaps, gives a didactic turn to the plays of Murphy

and Mrs. Sheridan, which renders them somewhat heavy when compared with the comedies of those who were rather among the wits, than the teachers, of their days. But a new brilliancy, too, was to be found in the later writers. Colman's "Jealous Wife," in which Garrick and Mrs. Pritchard were the Mr. and Mrs. Oakley, and the "Clandestine Marriage," principally Colman's, but in which Garrick had a share, were full of this brilliancy. With the exception of Hoadley's "Suspicious Husband," no modern comedy had such success as these. Every great actor still tries Mr. Oakley, and the noblest of old beaux has been the heritage only of the most finished of our comedians, from King, with whom it originated, down to Farren, with whom it seems to have died.

While the insolence of servants and the weaknesses of masters were satirised in "High Life below Stairs," a piece which George Selwyn was the gladder to see, as he was weary of low life above stairs—the disinterestedness of Irish wooers was asserted in Macklin's "Love à la Mode;" rascality, generally, was pummelled in Foote's "Minor;" novel-reading was proved to be perilous, in "Polly Honeycomb;" sharpers were exposed in Reed's "Register Office;" Platonic love was shown to be not without its dangers, in "The Deuce is in Him," and so on, with other pieces, than which none raised more laughter than the "Mayor of Garratt," in which Weston exhibited, in Jerry Sneak, the type of henpecked husbands, and Foote in Matthew Mug, a portrait of the Duke of Newcastle. Then Whitehead, in his

"School for Lovers," wrote a dull play on society to show that society was dull; and Mrs. Sheridan, in the "Discovery," pointed to the absurdity of young married people being unhappy. Opera was making way at both houses, but especially at Covent Garden, where, with a few other novelties of no note, Arne's "Artaxerxes," superbly set, was as superbly sung, by Tenducci, Beard, and Arne's famous pupil, Miss Brent. Bickerstaffe's "Love in a Village" followed, warbled by Beard and Miss Brent, as Hawthorn and Rosetta, and made joyous by Shuter's Justice Woodcock. The same writer's "Maid of the Mill" succeeded, in which Mattocks played Lord Aimworth; Beard, Giles; and Miss Brent, Polly,[1] the latter with a joyousness that never dreamed of the coming penury and hunger.

Managers, however, catered drolly for the public. Thus, on the 12th of October 1758, when Mossop acted Richard III., Signor Grimaldi relieved the tragedy, by dancing comic dances between the acts! Garrick, nevertheless, was not idle. During Barry's absence, David added to his original characters, Lovemore, in "The Way to Keep Him," Æmilius ("Siege of Aquileia"); Oakley ("Jealous Wife"), Sir John Dorilant ("School for Lovers"), Farmer ("Farmer's Return"), Alonzo ("Elvira"), and Sir Anthony Branville ("Discovery"). In the last, he exhibited a new style, in a new character. "He seemed utterly to have extinguished his natural talents, assuming a dry, stiff manner, with an immovable face, and thus

[1] Patty.

extracted from his pedantic object (who assumed every passion, without showing a spark of any in his action or features) infinite entertainment." Barry, meanwhile in Ireland, found that Sheridan had had a chequered time of it there. At one period, a course of prosperity; at another, he was the victim of gentlemen, from whose rude wooing he protected his actresses. The wooers called him "scoundrel-player." Sheridan answered that he was "as good a gentleman" as those who called him scoundrel; and, consequently, his life was not safe from these ruffians, who interrupted the performances, but against whom the collegians took side with the player. It was not until some blood was spilt, and the Lord Chief Justice, Ward, had condemned a young savage, named Kelly, to pay £500 fine and suffer three months' imprisonment, that peace was restored. At this trial, Kelly's counsel remarked, he had seen a gentleman-soldier and a gentleman-tailor, but had never seen a gentleman-player. "Sir," said Sheridan, with dignity, "I hope you see one now!"

Sheridan lost money, year after year, by paying excessive salaries to Woodward, the Macklins, and to operatic companies. Macklin and Mossop, together, nearly drove Sheridan mad; he was glad to be rid of both, and to find greater attraction in the beautiful Mrs. Woffington, who used to petition for kisses, once a year, and must have found little difficulty in procuring what she asked for, on her benefit nights.

At that time, nearly one hundred persons in the

Lord Lieutenant's household claimed free admission, the government allowing £100 a year, as the price for which it was purchased! But prosperity attended Sheridan's management, nevertheless, till he neglected the stage for claret, toasts, songs, and aristocratic fellowship. Therewith came a quarrel with his public. The latter had *encored* a speech delivered by Digges, in "Mahomet," which contained a passage applicable, in a hostile sense, to the viceregal court. Sheridan forbade Digges repeating this speech a second time, on the next representation, and Digges declining to do so, when the audience demanded it, the latter, in inconceivable rage, pulled the interior of the house to pieces, destroyed all the properties they could reach, broke up the wooden fittings, and flinging the box-doors upon them, set fire to the whole mass! The building was rescued with difficulty.

After a time it was repaired, and Sheridan let it to Victor and Sowdon, who in the season of 1754–55 engaged Barry and Miss Nossiter; and it is to be remarked that of all the characters he played Macbeth was the most, and Henry V. the least, attractive. Romeo stood midway in profit between those two. Mossop was the hero of the succeeding season, with profit to the management, after which Sheridan resumed the control; but not till he had been compelled to undergo a great humiliation. Fearing for the safety of his house, he consented to make public apology for his previous conduct in the management, and Sheridan was then patronised by the public, till Barry and Woodward, in October 1758, opened a

new theatre in Crow Street, and divided the patronage and the passions of the town. At Crow Street, there were Barry, young Mrs. Dancer, whom he afterwards married, Mossop, King, Woodward, and others. At Smock Alley, Mrs. Abington alone was a sufficient counter-attraction. But when Mossop passed over to manage Smock Alley, and the Countess of Brandon patronised him, in return for his permitting her to cheat him at cards, and Mrs. Bellamy joined the same troop, then Barry was put on his mettle; he secured Mrs. Abington and Shuter; and the town became as divided, and as furious and unreasonable, as if they were at issue on some point of religious belief. Mrs. Bellamy was arrested by a partisan of the adverse house, simply that she might be prevented from acting at the other; and the players were so often seduced from their engagements by the respective managers that the performers were sometimes called to go on the stage of one theatre when they were actually dressing at another! If Mossop chose "Othello" for his benefit one night, Barry was sure to have it for his own, on the same or the following evening. In short, the rival managers went on ruining each other. They exerted themselves, however, indefatigably, Barry playing even Macheath, and other operatic characters. He and Mossop formed extravagant engagements with every great actor, save Garrick, whom they could win over, down to clever dogs, and intelligent monkeys. At the end of a seven years' struggle, Barry found that Dublin could not support two theatres, and leaving Mossop

in possession of the field, he returned to London, having ruined himself and Woodward, and lost everything he possessed but his gentle humour, his suavity, his plausibility, and his hopes.

As a sample of Dublin theatrical life, in Barry's time, I cite the following passage from Gilbert's *History of Dublin*, and therewith close the subject for the present. "Dublin was kept in a state of commotion by the partisans of the rival theatres. As already noticed, the Countess of Brandon, with her adherents, attended constantly at Smock Alley, and would not appear at Crow Street; but Barry's tenderness in making love on the stage, at length brought the majority of the ladies to his house. Of the scenes which commonly occurred during this theatrical rivalry, on nights when some leading lady had bespoken a play, and made an interest for all parts of the house, particularly by pit and gallery tickets among her tradespeople, we have been left the following notice: The lady of the night goes early into the box-room to receive her company. This lady had sent out pit and gallery tickets to all her tradespeople, with the threatenings of the loss of her custom if they did not dispose of them; and the concern she was under, when the time was approaching for the drawing up the curtain, at the sight of a thin pit and galleries, introduced the following entertainment. The lady was ready to faint; and after smelling bottles were applied, she cried out, 'She was ruined and undone! She never would be able to look dear Mr. B. in the face any

more, after such a shocking disappointment.' At many of these repeated lamentations, the box-keeper advanced and said: 'I beg your ladyship will not be so disheartened; indeed, your ladyship's pit will mend and your ladyship's galleries, too, will certainly mend, before the play begins!' At which the lady cried, 'Out, you nasty flattering fellow! I tell you I'm undone, ruined, and undone! that's all. But I'll be revenged. I am resolved. I'll pay off —No—I'll turn off all my saucy tradesmen to-morrow morning.'"

During Barry's absence, some excellent actors took their last farewell of the English stage. Of these I will speak in the next chapter.

Mr Powell as Cyrus.

RICH AS HARLEQUIN.

CHAPTER XV.

RYAN, RICH, O'BRIEN.

PERHAPS the last of the players who had been contemporary with Betterton, died when Richard Ryan[1] departed this life, at his house in Crown Court, Westminster, in August 1760. Westminster claims him as born within the Abbey precincts, Paul's School for a pupil, and a worthy old Irish tailor for a son, of whom he was proud. Garrick confessed that Ryan's Richard was the one which, in its general features, he took as the model of his own, and Addison especially selected him to play Marcus in his "Cato."

[1] Should be Lacy Ryan.

He was but a mere boy when he first appeared with Betterton (who was playing Macbeth) as Seyton, wearing a full-bottomed wig, which would have covered two such heads as his. Between this inconvenience, and awe at seeing himself in presence of the greatest of English actors, the embarrassed boy hesitated, but the generous old actor encouraged him by a look, and young Ryan became a regularly engaged actor.

From first to last he continued to play young parts, and his Colonel Standard, in 1757, was as full of the spirit which defies age, as his Marcus, in 1713, was replete with the spirit which knows nothing *of* age. Easy in action, strong, but harsh of voice, careless in costume and carriage, but always earnest in his acting, he obtained and kept a place at the head of actors of the second rank, which exposed him to no ill feeling on the part of the few players who were his superiors.

Quin loved him like a brother; and it is singular that there was blood on the hands of both actors. Quin's sword despatched aggressive Bowen and angry Williams to Hades; and Ryan, put on his defence, slew one of the vapouring ruffians of the day, to the quiet satisfaction of all decent persons.

On June 20, 1718, the summer season at the Lincoln's Inn Fields house had commenced with "Tartuffe." After the play, Ryan was supping at the Sun, in Long Acre; he had taken off his sword, placed it in the window, and was thinking of no harm to any one, when he saw standing before him, flushed with

drink, weapon in hand, and all savagely athirst for a quarrel and a victim, one Kelly, whose pastime it was to draw upon strangers in coffee-houses, force them to combat, and send them home more or less marred in face or mutilated in body. Kelly stood there, not only daring Ryan, but making passes at him, which meant deadly mischief. The young actor took his sword from the window, drew it from the scabbard, and passing it through the bully's body, stretched him on the floor, with the life-blood welling from the wound. The act was so clearly one induced by self-protection, that Ryan was called to no serious account for it.

He had like to have fared worse on that later occasion, when, after playing Scipio, in "Sophonisba," he was passing home down Great Queen Street, and a pistol-shot was fired at him by one of three or four footpads, another of whom seized his sword. In this fray his jaw was shattered. "Friend, you have killed me; but I forgive you," said Ryan, who was picked up by the watch, and committed to surgical hands, from which he issued, after long suffering, something the worse for this serious incident in his life.

Ryan was the "esteemed Ryan" of numerous patrons, and when a benefit was awarded him, while he yet lay groaning on his couch, Royalty was there to honour it, and an audience in large numbers, the receipts from whom were increased by the golden guerdons forwarded to the sufferer from absent sympathisers. Perfect recovery he never reached, but he could still portray the fury of Orestes, the feeling

of Edgar, the sensibility of Lord Townley, the grief and anger of Macduff, the villainy of Iago, the subtilty of Mosca, the tipsyness of Cassio,[1] the spirit of young Harry, the airiness of Captain Plume, and the characteristics of many other parts, with great effect, in spite of increasing age, some infirmities, and a few defects and oddities.

I have already noticed how Quin, in his old days, declined any longer to play annually for Ryan's benefit, but offered him the £1000 sterling Quin had bequeathed to him in his will. Brave old actor! Dr. Herring, who was then Archbishop of Canterbury, had not in him a truer spirit of practical benevolence than James Quin manifested in this act to Dick Ryan,[2]—who died in 1760.

In the following year, died Rich, the father of Harlequins, in England. He has never been excelled by any of his sons, however agile the latter may have been. Rich (or Lun, as he called himself) was agile, too, but he possessed every other qualification; and his mute Harlequin was eloquent in every gesture. He made no motion, by head, hand, or foot, but something thereby was expressed intellegibly. Feeling, too, was pre-eminent with this expression; and he rendered the scene of a separation from Columbine as graceful, to use the words of Davies, as it was affecting. Not only was he thus skilled himself, but he taught others to make of silent but expressive action the interpreter of the

[1] I think Dr. Doran must have confused Cassio and Cassius, in which latter Ryan was excellent.

[2] Lacy Ryan.

mind; Hippisley, Nivelon, La Guerre, Arthur, and Lalauze, are enumerated by Davies, as owing their mimic power to the instructions given to them by Rich, whose action was in as strict accordance with the sentiment he had to demonstrate, as that of Garrick himself. The latter, in his prologue to "Harlequin's Invasion," in which Garrick introduced a speaking Harlequin, thus alluded to the then defunct hero :—

"But why a speaking Harlequin? 'tis wrong,
The wits will say, to give the fool a tongue.
When Lun appeared, with matchless art and whim,
He gave the pow'r of speech to ev'ry limb.
Tho' mask'd and mute, convey'd his quick intent,
And told, in frolic gestures, all he meant.
But now the motley coat, and sword of wood,
Require a tongue, to make them understood."

To introduce the speaking Harlequin was, however, only to restore to speech one of the most loquacious fellows who ever wore motley. For, as Colman had it, poor Harlequin—

"Once spoke,
And France and Italy admired each joke.
But Roundhead England, all things who curtails,
Who cuts off monarchs' heads and horses' tails,
By malice led, by rage and envy stung,
Put in his mouth a gag, and tied his tongue."

Rich thought himself so much a better actor than mimic, that he was ten times happier when giving foolish instruction to a novice training for Hamlet, than when he was marshalling his corps of pantomimists, and admirably teaching them to say everything, and yet be silent.

A man like John Rich, of course, had his little

jealousies. He was angry when the combination of Garrick and Quin filled his house and treasury, and when the season of 1746–47 yielded him a profit of nearly £9000, to which his wand of Harlequin had contributed little or nothing. He was wont to look at the packed audience, through a hole in the green curtain, and then murmur, "Ah! you are there, are you? much good may it do you!"

The avidity of the old public, however, to witness harlequinades, was even more remarkable than that of the present day. Then, pantomimes went through, not merely a part of one, but several seasons. Theobald's "Harlequin Sorcerer," which had often filled Lincoln's Inn Fields, was even more attractive at Covent Garden, above a quarter of a century later. The company assembled at mid-day, and sometimes broke the doors open, unless they were opened to them, by three o'clock, and so took the house by storm. Those who could not gain admittance went over to Drury Lane, but Garrick found them without heart for tragedy; the grown-up masters and misses had been deprived of their puppet show and rattle, and were sulky accordingly.

Booth, Wilks, and Cibber came under the somewhat dirty censure of Hogarth, who ridiculed them in a well-known unsavoury engraving for producing Harlequin Jack Sheppard. Booth tolerated these harlequinades, and Garrick acted in like fashion; remarking—"If you won't come to Lear and Hamlet, I must give you Harlequin;" and he perhaps gave them the best the stage ever had, save Rich, in

Woodward, who had worn the party-coloured jacket before, but who, in "Queen Mab," and in speaking Harlequins, exhibited an ability, the effect of which is illustrated in a contemporary print, wherein you see all the great actors of the day in one scale, and Harlequin Woodward in the other, who makes them kick the beam.

From the very first, however, the poets made protest against the invasion of the stage by foreign dancers and home-born Harlequins; and Cibber quotes Rowe as complaining, or asking, in a prologue to one of his first plays—

> "Must Shakspeare, Fletcher, and laborious Ben,
> Be left for Scaramouch and Harlequin?"

One of the most curious features connected with pantomime, and which certainly dignified Harlequin, was the assumption of that character by such sterling actors as Woodward and O'Brien. The *London Magazine*, a century ago, wished "that so eminent an actor as Woodward might never be permitted to put on the fool's coat again." Rich thought himself, indeed, as good an actor as they; but, though the son of a gentleman, he was illiterate: sometimes said turbot for *turban;* talked of *larning* Wilkinson to be a player; told Signora Spiletta always to lay her emphasis "on the *adjutant;*" and said to Tate, "You should see *me* play Richard!"

Nevertheless John Rich was supreme in his own particular line. His "catching the butterfly," and his "statue scene" were salient portions of his Harlequin, which people went to see because of

their excellence. Still finer was that in which Harlequin is hatched from the egg by the heat of the sun. Jackson calls it a masterpiece in dumb show; "from the first chipping of the egg, his receiving of motion, his feeling of the ground, his standing upright, to his quick harlequin trip round the empty shell, through the whole progression every limb had its tongue, and every motion a voice which spoke with most miraculous organ to the understandings and sensations of the observers."

There was this difference between Rich and Garrick in their conduct towards authors. Garrick would decline with courteous commendation a manuscript he had never looked at; but Rich kept a drawer full of such copy, and when an author demanded his piece, Rich would tell him to take which he liked best, he would probably find it better than his own.

Rich's good-humour seldom failed him, though he was warm of temper; he was less witty than Foote, but he was of a better nature. One night, during his proprietorship of Covent Garden, a man, rushing down the gallery, fell over into the pit. He was nearly killed; but Rich paid all the medical and other expenses, and the poor fellow, when his broken bones were whole again, called on the manager and expressed his gratitude for the kindness shown to him. "Well, sir," said Rich, "you must never think of coming into the pit, in that manner, again!" and, to prevent it, Rich gave him a free admission.

We should altogether misjudge Rich if we looked on him as the founder of the modern, miserable, purposeless, storyless harlequinade. This sort of entertainment deteriorated soon after his death. In 1782, Walpole saw the pantomime of "Robinson Crusoe," and his comment is, "how unlike the pantomimes of Rich, which are full of wit, and coherent, and carried on a story." Rich left Covent Garden to his son-in-law, Beard, the vocalist. Beard's first wife was Lady Henrietta Herbert, daughter of the Earl of Waldegrave, and this match was a happy one, though Lord Wharncliffe incorrectly recorded of Beard that he was "a man of indifferent character." Beard held Covent Garden, for himself and second wife, under a not unpleasant restriction. Rich directed that the property should be sold, whenever £60,000 could be got for it; and for that handsome sum the house was ultimately made over to Colman, Harris, and their partners.

Beard and Lady Herbert remind me of another *mésalliance*. In the studio of Catherine Read, the portrait painter, a good deal of love-making was carried on. Here is a February morning of 1764, and a young couple, all the handsomer for a bracing walk through the eager and nipping air, are conversing confidentially in one corner of the room while discreet Miss Read plies her work in another. The lady is Lady Susan Fox Strangways; the gentleman owns a villa at Dunstable, and is one of the airiest actors of the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, Mr. O'Brien.

Subsequently, the lady's father, Stephen Fox, the first Earl of Ilchester, opening his post-bag, hands a letter to Lady Susan from Lady Sarah Bunbury, his daughter's dearest friend. The letter was really from O'Brien, who imitated Lady Sarah's writing. The intrigue was discovered, and the father's wrath was so overwhelming, that Lady Susan promised that the affair should proceed no further, if she were only permitted to take a last farewell. She waited a few days for this final meeting, till she became of age, when, released from lock and key, she went on foot, escorted by a lacquey, to breakfast with Lady Sarah, and to call on Miss Read by the way. In the street, she sent the footman back, for a particular cap in which she was to be painted; a few moments after he was out of sight, a couple of chairmen were carrying her to Covent Garden Church, where Mr. O'Brien was waiting for her, and, the wedding ceremony being performed, the happy and audacious pair posted down to the bridegroom's villa at Dunstable. Only the night before he had played 'Squire Richard, in the "Provoked Husband."

This ended O'Brien's brief theatrical career of about eight years;[1] and therewith departed from the stage the most powerful rival Woodward ever encountered upon it; the original actor of Young Clackit, in the "Guardian;" Lovel, in "High Life Below Stairs;" Lord Trinket, in the "Jealous Wife;" Beverley, in "All in the Wrong;" Colonel Tamper, in the "Deuce is in Him," &c.

[1] He was on the stage not quite six years.

In one character O'Brien must have exhibited extraordinary humour—Sir Andrew Aguecheek. He was playing it on the 19th of October 1763, a period when it was the custom to have two sentinels posted on either side of the stage, and one of these fellows was so overcome by Sir Andrew's comicality, that he laughed till he fell, to the infinite amusement of all who witnessed the circumstance.

O'Brien's marriage caused a sensation in the fashionable world, and brought sorrow to some parties. On April the 9th, 1764, Walpole writes to Mann:—"A melancholy affair has happened to Lord Ilchester; his eldest daughter, Lady Susan (Strangways), a very pleasing girl, though not handsome, married herself, two days ago, at Covent Garden Church, to O'Brien, a handsome young actor. Lord Ilchester doated on her, and was the most indulgent of fathers. 'Tis a cruel blow." Three days later, Walpole writes to Lord Hereford, "Poor Lady Susan O'Brien is in the most deplorable situation, for her Adonis is a Roman Catholic, and cannot be provided for out of his calling." Sir Francis Delaval, one of the rich amateur actors of his time, touched by her calamity, "made her a present of—what do you think?" asks Horace, "of a rich gold stuff! The delightful charity! O'Brien comforts himself, and says it will make a shining passage in his little history!"

As O'Brien had not the means whereby to live without acting, his wife's noble family thought it would be no disgrace, to *hide* the disgrace which had

fallen upon it, by providing for the young couple—at the public expense. Accordingly, a grant of lands in America was procured for them, and thither they went. On Christmas Day 1764, Charles Fox writes of his cousin, to Sir George Macartney:—"We have heard from Lady Susan since her arrival at New York. I do not think they will make much of their lands, and I fear it will be impossible to get O'Brien a place." When Charles Fox wrote this he was about fifteen, and looked as handsome as he does in the famous picture at Holland House, which contains also the portraits of Lady Susan, who married the actor, and Lady Sarah Lennox (Bunbury), who did *not* marry the king.

The Board of Ordnance ultimately provided for O'Brien, and the player and his aristocratic wife were away between seven and eight heavy years beyond the Atlantic. Weary of their banishment they returned to England, without leave asked of the Board. O'Brien was not the only officer in England without leave. In the *Last Journals of Horace Walpole*, which I edited in 1858, the Journalist says:—"General Conway was labouring to reform that department (the Board of Ordnance), and had ordered all the officers under it to repair to their posts, those in America particularly, who had abandoned their duty. O'Brien received orders, among the rest, to return, but he refused. Conway declared they would dismiss him. Lord and Lady Holland interposed; but Conway was firm, and he turned out O'Brien."

Lord Ilchester, albeit ashamed of his son-in-law,

was not ashamed to write to Lord North, soliciting a place for O'Brien; but Lord North did not even reply to the letter. It is just possible that the player was a proximate cause of Fox's withdrawal from the administration, and his becoming in permanent opposition to the Court. Fox had spoken against Lord North, and the latter endeavoured to conciliate him. "He weakly and timidly called him aside, and asked him if he had seen Maclean, who had got the post which had been asked for O'Brien, and who would make O'Brien his deputy; but this Fox received with contempt."

Let me remark here, that in "blood," young O'Brien was the equal of Lady Susan. In the days of Charles I., Stephen Fox, her ancestor, was bailiff to Sir Edward Nicolas, the king's secretary, at Winterbourne, Wilts; where Stephen (not yet *Sir* Stephen) occasionally officiated as clerk of the parish. At that time the direct ancestor of our lucky actor was a member of that ancient family of those O'Briens, who generally contrived to take opposite sides in every quarrel. William O'Brien's grandfather was faithful to the cause of James II., and on the capitulation of Limerick, made his way to France, where he served in the Irish brigade, under O'Brien, Viscount Clare. That brigade, many of whose members "took to the road" in France, in order to support themselves, turned out first-rate fencing-masters, who lived by teaching. Such was the father of our O'Brien, and such was the family history of the actor; and surely the descendant of King Brien of the Tributes was of

as good blood as the daughter of a house, the first worthy, that is to say unfortunate, member, of which was parish clerk in a Wiltshire village.

O'Brien failing to obtain a post, or to enjoy the laborious luxury of a sinecure, turned his attention to writing for the stage, and on the night of December 8, 1772, he produced two pieces—at Drury Lane, his comedy of "The Duel;" at Covent Garden, his comedietta "Cross Purposes." The first is an adaptation of the "Philosophe sans le savoir," in which Barry did not more affect his audience than I have seen Baptiste *aîné* do, on the French stage. "The Duel," however, failed, through the mawkish, sentimental, scenes which the adapter worked in, at the suggestion of some of his noble relatives, who spoiled his play, but made him pecuniary compensation for its ill-fortune.

"Cross Purposes," also an adaptation—from "Les trois frères rivaux," was more lucky. It was levelled at the follies of the day, and every one was amused by the light satire. In the first piece, Barry was sublime in his affectation of cheerfulness, on his daughter's wedding-day, while his son is engaged in a duel fought under paternal sanction. In the second, Shuter as Grub, and Quick as Consol, made the house as hilarious, as Barry, in the scenes in which he was engaged, made his audience sympathetic.

Mrs. Cibber, addressing Mrs. Woffington, in the "Dialogue in the Shades," speaks of O'Brien and Powell as the only actors of eminence who had appeared since Margaret's time. O'Brien was entirely in

Woodward's line, from Mercutio to Harlequin. I collect from Genest, that after his aristocratic connections made a placeman of him, O'Brien grew ashamed of his vocation. "If we may judge from . . . what I was told in 1803, when I resided in his neighbourhood, O'Brien had, since he left the stage, wished to sink the player, and to bury in oblivion those years of his life which are the most worth being remembered—ashamed, perhaps, of a profession which is no disgrace to any one who conducts himself respectably in it, and in which to succeed, is, generally speaking, a proof of good natural abilities, and a diligent application of them—*Ex quovis ligno non fit Mercurius.* It is not everybody that can make even a moderate actor."

O'Brien left the stage after playing Squire Richard, and subsequently he became William O'Brien, of Stinsford, County of Dorset, Esq." His wife died on the 9th of August 1827, on which night the Haymarket Company acted the "Poor Gentleman!"

Before Barry reappeared in London, the stage suffered more serious losses than these. At one, Garrick uttered a cry—as of anguish, at the falling away of the brightest jewel of the stage.

THEATRE ROYAL, DRURY LANE.

CHAPTER XVI.

SUSANNA MARIA CIBBER.

"Mrs. Cibber dead!" said Garrick, "then tragedy has died with her!"[1] When he uttered this, on the 31st of January 1766, he little knew that a young girl, named Sarah Kemble, then in her twelfth year, was a strolling actress, playing juvenile tragedy, and light opera, was reciting or singing between the acts, and was preparing herself for greatness.

Let us look back to the early time and the room over the upholsterer's shop, in King Street, Covent

[1] Another version, and a better, of his saying is:—"Barry and I still remain, but tragedy is dead on one side."

Garden, where Tom Arne and his sister, Susanna Maria, are engaged in musical exercises. Tom ought to have been engrossing deeds, and that fair and graceful, and pure-looking girl, to be thinking of anything but coming out in Lampe's opera, "Amelia," the words by Carey. The old Roman Catholic upholsterer had been sorely tried by the heterodox inclinations of his children. They lived within sound of the musical echoes of the theatres, and thereof came Dr. Arne, the composer, and his sister, the great singer, the greater and ever youthful actress.

In 1732, Susanna Maria Arne appeared successfully in Lampe's serious opera, "Amelia," which was "set in the Italian manner," and brought out at what was called the "French Theatre," in the Haymarket. Miss Arne was then about twenty years of age, with a symmetry of figure and a sweetness of expression which she did not lose during the four-and-thirty years she continued on the stage. In the Venus of her early days, she was as beautiful as the Venus Populari, whose mother was Dione, and her Psyche was as timid, touching, and inquiring, as she who charmed the gods from the threshold of Olympus.

It is not pleasant to think that on a young creature so fair, bright, pure, and accomplished,—an honest man's honest daughter, such a sorry rascal as Ancient Pistol, — Theophilus Cibber, in fact, should have boldly cast that one of his two squinting eyes, which he could bring to bear with most effect upon a lady. When, as a newly-married couple, they stood before

Colley Cibber, they must have looked like Beauty and the Beast!

Beauty soon overcame the elder Cibber's antipathy. Colley could not withstand the new magic to which he was subjected; and when it was first proposed that the brilliant vocalist should become a regular actress, Colley, however much he may have shaken his head at first, favoured the design, and gave all necessary instructions to his winning, beautiful, and docile daughter-in-law. Can you not see the pair in that first floor in Russell Street? Half the morning, she has been repeating Zara, never wearied by Cibber's frequent interruptions. Perseverance was ever one of her great characteristics; and she carries herself, and sweeps by with her train, and speaks meltingly or sternly, in grief or in anger, her voice silvery and, with its modulation, under command,—a voice in the very sound of which there were smiles or tears, sunshine or storm;—all this she does, or exercises, at Colley's sole suggestions, you suppose. Not a bit of it! Susanna Cibber has a little will of her own; and she is quite right, for she has as much intellect as will, and docile as she is when she sees the value of Colley's teaching, she supports her own views when she is satisfied that these are superior to the ideas of the elderly gentleman who, standing in an attitude for imitation, to which she opposes one of her own, lets the frown on his brow pass off into a smile, as he protests, "foregad!" that the saucy thing could impart instruction to himself.

On the 12th of January 1736, the great attempt was made, and Mrs. Cibber came out as Zara, to the Lusignan of Milward, the Nerestan of her husband, and the Selima of Mrs. Pritchard, who had not yet reached the position which this young actress occupied at a bound, but beyond which Mrs. Pritchard was destined yet to go.

For fourteen consecutive nights, Susanna drowned houses in tears, and stirred the very depths of men's hearts, even her husband's, who was so affected that he claimed, and obtained, the doubling of the salary first agreed on for his wife. Theophilus, of course, did not keep the money; he spent it all, to his great, temporary, satisfaction. His wife's next appearance was in comedy, — Indiana ("Conscious Lovers"), where the neat simplicity of her manners, and the charm which she seemed to shed on even commonplace expressions, formed a strong contrast to the more solemn but stilted dignity of her tragedy queens, the glory of which faded before the perfection of her Ophelia. For this character, her voice, musical qualities, her figure, and her inexpressibly sweet features, all especially suited her. Wilkinson states that no eloquence could paint her distressed and distracted look, when she said: "Lord, we know what we are, but know not what we may be!" Charming in all she undertook, all her critics pronounced her unapproachable in Ophelia, and through all the traditions of the stage, there is not one more abiding than that which says that Mrs. Cibber was identified with the distraught maiden. Her Juliet,

Constance, Belvidera, exhibited rare merits, while as Alicia, in the mad scene, "the expression of her countenance, and the irresistible magic of her voice, thrilled to the very soul of her whole audience," says Murphy. Wilkinson was powerless when attempting to mimic the voice and expression of Mrs. Cibber. The tone, manner, and method of Garrick, Quin, Mrs. Bellamy, Mrs. Crawford (Barry), nay, even the very face of Mrs. Woffington, he could reproduce with wonderful approach to exactness. But Mrs. Cibber's excellence baffled him. He remembered her and it, but he could not do more than remember. "It is all in my mind's eye," he would say, with a sigh at his incapacity.

In fine ladies and in sprightly comedy,—save in the playful delivery of epilogues,—Mrs Cibber comparatively failed. Among her original characters were the Lady, in "Comus," Sigismunda, Arpasia, in Johnson's "Irene," Zaphira, in "Barbarossa," and Cœlia, in Whitehead's comedy, the "School for Lovers." In these, as in all she played, I collect from various sources, that Mrs. Cibber was distinguished for unadorned simplicity, artless sensibility, harmony of voice, now sweetly plaintive, now grandly powerful, and eyes that in tender grief seemed to swim in tears; in rage, to flash with fire; in despair, to become as dead. Her beauty did not so much consist in regularity of feature as in variety and power of expression; with this, she had symmetry of form: and this, indeed, is true beauty. She preserved these gifts which age lightly touched, and to

the last it was impossible to look at her figure and not think her young, or view her face and not consider her handsome.

Mrs. Cibber would, perhaps, have been one of the happiest women of her day, had she not been cursed with a husband who was no more made for her than Caliban for Miranda. Theophilus could not appreciate her but as a gold winner, and he so abused the treasure, of which he was every way unworthy, as to expose her to temptations by which that unhanged villain hoped to profit; but by yielding to which she got rid of her "most filthy bargain," lost nothing in the public esteem, and acquired a protector and a home,—neither of which she ought to have wanted. There she enjoyed all the becomingnesses of life, save one; and she continued to act with better heart, but under physical infirmities, which her physicians could not understand, nor her applauding audiences believe in, till death struck her down in the very midst of her labours.

She was not only of good heart to the last, but apparently as little affected by age as by her domestic trials. She wore spectacles? Yes! I confess that much. There she sits, somewhat past fifty, at Garrick's house, spectacles on nose, reading her part of Cœlia, in the "School for Lovers." Now Cœlia is but sixteen, and some one suggests, only seeing those spectacles, that it would be better to call her at least twenty-three. Mrs. Cibber looked up smilingly through her "glasses," quietly dissented, and when the piece was acted, she played the young and gentle Cœlia

with such effect, that no one present thought of Mrs. Cibber being older than the part represented her to be.

King George III. has the reputation of having killed Mrs. Cibber, indirectly. His Majesty commanded the "Provoked Wife," in which she was to play Lady Brute. Ill health, for which physicians could not account, had reduced her strength; but the Roman Catholic actress was determined to perform the duty expected from her, to that most Protestant King. But she never trod the stage again. The career which had commenced in 1732, closed in January 1766;[1] and in the month following all that was mortal of this once highly, but, perhaps, fatally gifted lady, was entombed in the cloisters of Westminster Abbey, not within the edifice, like Mrs. Oldfield, opposite Congreve's monument, but in the cloisters, whither had preceded her Aphra Behn, Mrs. Bracegirdle, and the father of the restored English stage, "Mr. Betterton, gentleman." Rather more than seven years had then elapsed since Theophilus Cibber had gone down, twelve fathoms deep, to the bottom of the Irish sea; and about the same time, short of a month or so, had gone by since Colley Cibber had been brought hither to rest in the neighbourhood of defunct, but once real, kings and queens.

The voice of Mrs. Cibber, the soul of Mrs. Pritchard, and the eye of Garrick, formed a combination which in one actor would, according to Walpole, render him

[1] Should be December 1765. Her name is in the bill for the last time on 13th December 1765.

superior to all actors the world had seen or could see. Hitherto it has *not* been seen.

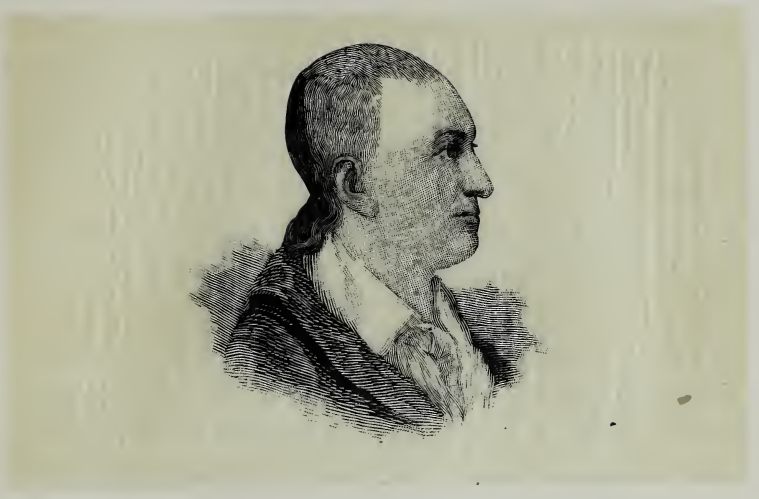
Gentle as Mrs. Cibber was, she could master Garrick himself. "She was the greatest female plague belonging to my house," he once said, with the memory on him of the strong language of Kitty Clive, and the rough thrusts of other heroines. These he could parry, but not Susanna Cibber. "Whatever her object, a new part or a new dress, she was always sure to carry her point by the acuteness of her invention, and the steadiness of her perseverance."

Her misfortunes in life brought some affronts upon her. Thus, in October 1760, she was at Bath, with Mr. Sloper, the "protector" of whom I have spoken, and their daughter, "Miss Cibber." The whole party went to the Rooms, where the young lady was led out to dance. She was followed by another couple, of whom the lady protested against Miss Cibber being allowed to dance there at all. There would have been more modesty in this second young lady if she had been silent. There ensued a fracas, of course. Mrs. Delaney, in a letter to Mrs. Dewes, says that "Mr. Cibber" collared Mr. Collett, abused him, and asked if he had caused this insult to be put *on his daughter?* Mr. "Sloper" must be meant, for Theophilus was then dead. The affront was the result of directions given by that very virtuous personage, Beau Nash, then being wheeled about the room. Some discourse was held with the shattered beau, but nothing came of it; and pretty Miss Cibber never

danced, or was asked to dance, at Bath again. This brings us back to the mother, from whom I am pleased to part with a pleasanter incident. Dr. Delaney once sat enraptured, as he listened to her at Dublin, singing in the "Messiah;" and, as she ceased, he could not help murmuring on behalf of the accomplished singer, "Woman, thy sins be forgiven thee!" *Amen!* And so passes away "the fair Ophelia," in that character, at least, never to be equalled.

From Scotland Yard, where she died, the way was not long to Westminster Abbey Cloisters. With what rites she was committed to the earth, I cannot say; but a paper on the doors of the Roman Catholic Chapel, in Lincoln's Inn Fields, that day, requested you, "of your charity," to "pray for the soul of Mrs. Susanna Maria Cibber!"

Amen again! She was a woman more sinned against than sinning, and so well respected, that Mr. and Mrs. Garrick visited her and Mr. Sloper at the country house of the latter, at Woodhay; where Ophelia taught her parrot snatches of old tragedy, and exhibited the bird to her laughing friends. The highest salary this "Tragic Muse" ever received was £600 for sixty nights; and this £10 per night was often earned under such tremor and suffering, that Mrs. Cibber would exclaim, with the applause ringing in her ears, "Oh! that my nerves were made of cart-ropes!" But we must leave her, for an actor who re-enters, and an actress who departs.



DAVID GARRICK

CHAPTER XVII.

REAPPEARANCE OF SPRANGER BARRY—RETIREMENT OF MRS. PRITCHARD.

After playing some nights at the Opera House, in 1766, and with Foote at the little house in the Haymarket, where Thalia and Melpomene reigned on alternate nights, in 1767, Barry and Mrs. Dancer,—the former after an absence of ten years,—appeared at Drury Lane, in October of the last-named year. Direct rivalry with Garrick there was none: for the latter and Mrs. Pritchard acted together on one night; Barry and Mrs. Dancer played their favourite characters the next; while King, Dodd, Palmer, Parsons,

Mrs. Abington, Mrs. Clive, and Miss Pope, led in comedy. The two great tragedians acted in the same company till 1774, when Barry passed to Covent Garden, where he remained till his death, in 1777,—a few months only before that of Woodward, and about half a year subsequent to the retirement of Garrick, from Drury Lane and the stage.

"I hear the stage in England is worse and worse," wrote Fox to Fitzpatrick, from Nice in 1768. I do not know what foundation there was for such a report, save that the school of sentimental comedy had then come in and established itself,—the founder being Kelly, an honest, clever, Irish ex-staymaker, and his essay being made with "False Delicacy" (Cecil, King; Lady Betty Lambton, Mrs. Abington). Mrs. Pritchard, too, had then just retired, leaving the tragic throne to be contended for by Mrs. Yates and Mrs. Dancer, who subsequently reigned as Mrs. Barry, and who, as Mrs. Crawford, was finally superseded by Mrs. Siddons.

So firmly as well as suddenly had sentimental comedy come into fashion, that when Goldsmith's "Good-Natured Man" (Croaker, Shuter; Honeywood, Powell—who disliked his part; Miss Richland, Mrs. Bulkley) was produced in 1768, at Covent Garden, it nearly failed, through the scene of the bailiffs, which was considered too farcical for genteel comedy! The age was rapidly becoming almost too fastidious. The reaction was carrying it too far; and the moral Mrs. Sheridan's first comedy, "The

Dupe," was condemned,[1] for offences which it was said to contain against decorum. Even Johnson disapproved of the bailiffs, in Goldsmith's comedy, though he was the first to enjoy the rich humour of the lower characters in "She Stoops to Conquer." The sage did not spare sarcasm. "Are you going to make a scholar of him?" asked Goldsmith, in reference to the petted boy who waited on Johnson. "Aye, sir," was the reply, "scholar enough to write a bailiff scene in a comedy!"

Garrick now rested entirely on his old triumphs; but he acted repeatedly with Mrs. Barry. Romeo dropped from the repertory of Garrick and Barry; but Lear and Macbeth were played by each of them to the Cordelia and Lady of Barry's wife, whose versatility was remarkable, for she was the first, the best, and the richest-brogued of Widow Bradys, as she was the most touching and dignified of Lady Randolphs. As Lord and Lady Townley, the Barrys drew great houses; but Garrick was not disturbed, for his Ranger and his Hamlet drew greater still; and none of the original characters played by Barry during this, his last engagement at Drury Lane, reached a popularity which could ruffle Garrick's peace of mind. These were Rhadamistus, in "Zenobia;" Ronan, in "Fatal Discovery;" Tancred, in "Almida;" Timon, in Cumberland's version of "Timon of Athens;" Aubrey, in the "Fashionable Lover;" Evander (to his wife's Euphrasia), in the "Grecian Daughter;" Melville, in the "Duel;" and Seraphis, in "Sethona."

[1] On 10th December 1763.

Of these, Evander showed the actor's mastery over the feelings of his audience; Aubrey was distinguished for its grave, and Melville for its touching, dignity. With his admirers, he was still the "silver-tongued Barry," and the "silver-toned lover;" but the thick-and-thin adherents to Garrick repeated these phrases satirically, in allusion only to the *silversmith*, who was Spranger Barry's father.

Voltaire had written a criticism against Shakspeare's Hamlet, which Garrick adopted; and, mangling the bard whom he professed to love, he put "Hamlet" on the stage without the Grave-diggers and without Osrick! This mutilation passed for Shakspeare, until John Bannister restored the original, on playing the Dane, for his own benefit, in 1780. Yet, so irreverent to the spirit of Garrick did this proceeding seem to old Wrighton, that when Bannister came off the stage, the elder player said to him: "Well, sir, if ever you should meet with Mr. Garrick in the next world, you will find that he will never forgive you for having restored the Grave-diggers to Hamlet!"[1]

The most serious event, however, of this time, was the retirement of Mrs. Pritchard—a more serious loss to the stage, perhaps, than the death of Mrs. Cibber. She had well earned repose, after five-and-thirty years of most arduous labour.

In 1733, Mrs. Pritchard, a young and well-reputed married woman, was acting at our suburban fairs, but

[1] In the Memoirs of Bannister a speech to this effect is attributed to Waldron.

how much earlier, as Miss Vaughan, does not appear. Her slender cultivation, or rather her total want of education, is no proof that she was not of a respectable family; and the pertinacity of her brother, a clever low comedian, Henry Vaughan, in pursuing a claim to property left by a relative, Mr. Leonard, of Lyon's Inn, shows that there was one quality connected with the family which the world respects.

Mrs. Pritchard did not at once win, but long worked for her fortune. Her husband held a subordinate post in the theatre, till her talents raised him above it. Her history, in one point, resembles Betterton's; it was a life of pure, honest, unceasing labour; she was too busy to afford much material for further record. In another point, it resembled Mrs. Betterton's, in the unobtrusive virtue of her character. While Margaret Woffington was pretending to lament over the temptations to which she yielded, and George Anne Bellamy yielded without lamenting, honest Mrs. Pritchard neither yielded nor lamented. It is true, she was not so inexpressibly beautiful as Margaret, not so saucily seductive as George Anne, but she carried with her the lustre of rectitude, and the beauty of honesty and truth; living, she was welcomed wherever virtue kept home; and dying, she left fairly-acquired wealth, a good example, and an irreproachable name to her children.

At first she fought her way very slowly, but played everything, from Nell to Ophelia; and throughout her career she originated every variety of character, from Selima, in "Zara," to Tag, in "Miss in her

Teens;" from Mrs. Beverley, in the "Gamester," to Clarinda, in the "Wedding Day;" from Hecuba to Mrs. Oakley.

We are so familiar with the prints of her as Hermione and Lady Macbeth, and to hear of her awful power in the latter, as well as of the force and dignity of her Merope, Creusa, and Zara, her almost too loud excess of grief in Volumnia, and the absolute perfection of her two queens, Katherine and Gertrude, that we are apt to remember her as a tragedian only. Her closet-scene, as the queen in "Hamlet," was so fine and finished in every detail that its unequalled excellence remains a tradition of the stage, like the Ophelia of Mrs. Cibber. There was a slight tendency to rant,[1] and some lack of grace in her style, which, according to others, marred her tragedy. On the other hand, there is no dispute as to her excellence in comedy, particularly before she grew stout; and, indeed, in spite of her becoming so, as in Millamant, in which, even in her latest years, her easy manner of speaking and action charmed her audience, though elegance of form and the beauty of youth were no longer there.

As a perfectly natural actress, she was admirable in such parts as Mrs. Oakley, Doll Common, and the Termagant, in the "'Squire of Alsatia." With such characters she identified herself. I find her less commended in artificial ladies like Clarissa and

[1] This is scarcely accurate. The fault referred to was that of "too loud and profuse expression of grief;" or, as Garrick put it, "She was apt to *blubber* her grief."

Lady Dainty; and for queens of fashion, like Lady Townley and Lady Betty Modish. Yet, although she only pleased in these high-bred personages, she was "inimitably charming" in Rosalind and Beatrice, in Estifania and Clarinda, in Mrs. Sullen and Lady Brute; and in all characters of intrigue, gaiety, wit, playfulness, and diversity of humour. I may sum up all by repeating that her distinguishing qualities were natural expression, unembarrassed deportment, propriety of action, and an appropriateness of delivery which was the despair of all her contemporaries, for she took care of her consonants, and was so exact in her articulation, that, however voluble her enunciation, the audience never lost a syllable of it. Mrs. Pritchard and Mrs. Abington were selected, at various periods, to represent the Comic Muse, and nothing can better indicate their quality and merits.

Garrick, Quin, Mrs. Cibber, and Mrs. Pritchard, acting in the same piece, at Covent Garden! No wonder that Walpole, in 1746, says, "Plays only are in fashion," and calls the company, which included Woodward, Ryan, and Mrs. Horton, as "the best company that, perhaps, ever were together." In Mrs. Pritchard's Beatrice, as in Mrs. Clive's Bizarre, Garrick, as Benedict to the first, and Duretete to the second, had an antagonism on the stage which tested his utmost powers. Each was determined to surpass the other; but Walpole intimates that Mrs. Pritchard won in *her* contest, and states that Garrick hated her because her Beatrice (which he preferred to Miss Farren's) had more spirit and originality

than his Benedict. Walpole also praised her Maria ("Nonjuror"), and only smiled at her Jane Shore when she had become so fat, that for her to talk of the pangs of starvation seemed ridiculous. But the highest mark of his, never easily won, estimation of this great actress consisted in his refusal to allow his "Mysterious Mother" to be acted, as Mrs. Pritchard was about to leave the stage, and there was no one else who could play the Countess.

Walpole knew her as a neighbour as well as a player, for Mrs. Pritchard purchased Ragman's Castle, a villa on the Thames, between Marble Hill and Orleans House, which she bought against an opposing bidder, Lord Lichfield, and resided in it till Walpole took it of her, for his niece, Lady Waldegrave. The actress was occasionally his guest, and he testifies to the becomingness and propriety of her behaviour; but sneers a little at that of her son, the Treasurer of Drury Lane, as being better than he had expected.

Johnson said that it was only on the stage Mrs. Pritchard was inspired with gentility and understanding; but Churchill exclaims,

> "Pritchard, *by Nature* for the stage designed,
> In person graceful, and in sense refined,
> Her wit, as much as Nature's friend became,
> Her voice as free from blemish as her fame,
> Who knows so well in Majesty to please,
> Attempered with the graceful charms of ease?"

And contrasting her great qualities with the increasing figure which, perhaps, offended, in her later years, "the eye's too curious sense," Churchill adds,

"But when perfections of the mind break forth,
Honour's chaste sallies, judgment's solid worth,
When the pure, genuine flame by Nature taught,
Springs into sense and every action's thought,
Before such merit all objections fly,
Pritchard's genteel, and Garrick six feet high."

I believe that the French actress, Rachel, was so ignorant of the true history of that which she represented, that, to her, all the events, in the various pieces in which she played, happened in the same comfortable chronological period "once upon a time." One of the greatest actresses of the Garrick period, in some respects perhaps *the* greatest, was equally ignorant. Mrs. Pritchard, it is said, had never read more of the tragedy of "Macbeth" than her own part, as it was delivered to her in manuscript, by the prompter, to be got "by heart." Quin was nearly as ignorant, if a questionable story may be credited. Previously to Garrick's coming, the "Macbeth" which was played as Shakspeare's was really Davenant's, with Locke's music. When Garrick announced that, for the future, he would have Shakspeare's tragedy and not Davenant's opera acted, no man was more surprised than Quin; "Why!" he exclaimed, "do you mean to say that we have not been playing Shakspeare all this while?" Quin had less excuse than Mrs. Pritchard, —for how was that poor lady—"the inspired idiot," Johnson styled her—a strange sort of person, who called for her "gownd," but whose acquired eloquence was beautiful and appropriate,—how was poor Mrs. Pritchard to know anything of the chronology of the

story, when Garrick played the Thane in a modern gold-laced suit, and she herself might have called on the Princess Amelia, in her dress for the Thane's wife? Nevertheless, the incomparable two were as triumphant as if they had been dressed according to time and place. Nor were they less so in two other characters which they dressed to the full as much out of propriety, though not of grace,—namely, Benedict and Beatrice.

I have alluded to the essay made by Miss Pritchard. Let me add that when the young lady first appeared as Juliet, Mrs. Pritchard as her mother, Lady Capulet, led her on the stage. The scenes between them were heightened in interest, for Lady Capulet hovered about Juliet with such maternal anxiety, and Juliet appealed by her looks so lovingly to her mother, for a sign of guidance or approval, that many of the audience were moved to tears.

The house was moved more deeply still on an after night,—the 24th of April 1768,—the night of Mrs. Pritchard's final farewell, when Garrick played Macbeth in a brown court suit, laced with gold, and she the "lady," with a terrible power and effect such as even the audiences in those days were little accustomed to. Her "Give *me* the daggers!" on that night was as grand as her "Are you a man?" and when the curtain descended, such another intellectual treat was not looked for in that generation.

There was a "tremendous house," to which she tremblingly delivered a poetical address, written by Garrick, in which she said—

"In acted passion tears must seem to flow,
But I have that within that passeth show."

Her old admirers stood by their allegiance, and even Mrs. Siddons' Lady Macbeth, in long after years, could not shake it. Lord Harcourt, no lukewarm friend of Mrs. Siddons, missed in *her* Lady Macbeth "the unequalled compass and melody of Mrs. Pritchard." In the famous sleep-walking scene, his lordship still held Mrs. Siddons to be inferior,—there was not the horror in the sigh, nor the sleepiness in the tone, nor the articulation in the voice, as in Mrs. Pritchard's, whose exclamation of "Are you a man?" was as much superior in significance to that of Mrs. Siddons, as the "Was he alive?" of Mrs. Crawford's (Barry's) Lady Randolph was, in the depth of anxious tenderness.

Mrs. Pritchard retired to Bath to enjoy her hard-earned leisure; but met the not uncommon fate of those who withdraw from toil, to breathe awhile, and repose, in the autumn of their days. A trifling accident to her foot took a fatal turn, and in the August of the year in which she withdrew, she closed her honoured and laborious career. Her name, her example, and her triumphs all deserve to be cherished in the memory of her younger sisters, struggling to win fame and resolved not to tarnish it. Garrick's respect for her was manifested in the remark once made at the mention of her name: "*She* deserves everything we can do for her."

Mrs. Pritchard's daughter failed to sustain the glory of her mother's name. The season of 1767–68 was

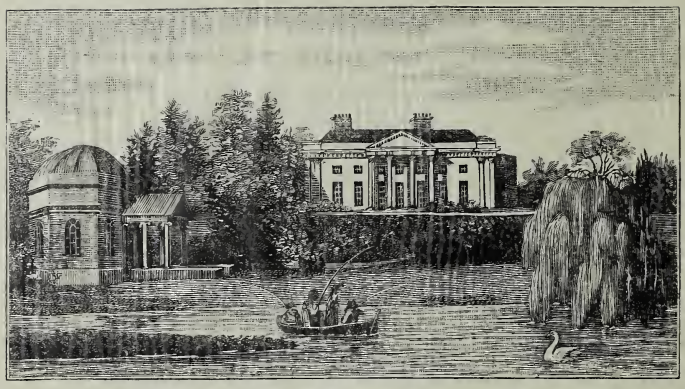
the last for both ladies, as it was for Mrs. Pritchard's son-in-law, the first and more coxcombical of the two John Palmers. Mrs. Palmer was short, but elegant and refined; unequal to tragedy, except, perhaps, in the gentle tenderness of Juliet; she was a respectable actress in minor parts of comedy, such as Harriet ("Jealous Wife"), and Fanny ("Clandestine Marriage"), of which she was the original representative. Palmer died three months before his mother-in-law, at the early age of forty, leaving bright stage memories as the original representative of the Duke's servant in "High Life below Stairs," Sir Brilliant Fashion, Brush ("Clandestine Marriage"), &c. His widow remarried with Mr. Lloyd, a political writer, and a *protégé* of Lord North.

The inheritance of Mrs. Cibber and Mrs. Pritchard was to be won by a young girl, who, about the time of Mrs. Pritchard's death, was playing Ariel and other characters in barns and hotel-rooms,—namely, Sarah Kemble,—subsequently Siddons. Miss Seward saw the three great actresses; the first two in her younger days. She never forgot the clear, distinct, and modulated voice of Mrs. Pritchard, nor the pathetic powers, the delicate, expressive features, and the silvery voice, sometimes too highly pitched, of Mrs. Cibber. Mrs. Pritchard's figure, we are told, was then "coarse and large, nor could her features, plain even to hardness, exhibit the witchery of expression. She was a just and spirited actress; a more perfectly good speaker than her more elegant, more fascinating contemporary. Mrs. Siddons has all the pathos of Mrs. Cibber, with

a thousand times more variety in its exertion, and she has the justness of Mrs. Pritchard, while only Garrick's countenance could vie with her's in those endless shades of meaning which almost make her charming voice superfluous, while the fine proportion and majesty of her form, and the beauty of her face, eclipse the remembrance of all her consummate predecessors." Tate Wilkinson states, in his memoirs, that Mrs. Siddons always reminded him of Mrs. Cibber, in voice, manner, and features.

But before we address ourselves to Sarah Kemble, we have to chronicle the last years of two great actors, with whose period she is connected by having played with the greater of the two,—Garrick and Barry.

Mr. Garrick as Macbeth.



GARRICK'S HOUSE, HAMPTON.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE LAST YEARS OF GARRICK AND BARRY.

During the remainder of the period that Garrick and Barry continued at the same house, the stage seemed to languish as their career drew to a close. Barry's energies slackened, and Garrick studied no new part. Within the same period old Havard died, after a service of utilities and some authorship, which extended to nearly threescore years.[1] If power may be judged by effects, Havard was a powerful writer, for his "Charles I.," when acted at York, excited

[1] I think Dr. Doran must mean twoscore years. Havard made his first appearance in 1730; his last in 1769.

such painful emotions in a young lady named Terrot that she died of it. Kitty Clive now retired, and Holland died, it is said, of small-pox; but he was more affected by Powell's death. After this event he was standing in the green-room, talking mournfully of his comrade. "The first time we played together in private," he said, "I acted Iachimo to his Posthumus. When I first appeared in public, we performed the same characters; and they were the last we ever played together!" "And you are dressed for Iachimo, as you tell it," added a listener. Holland smiled sadly; and soon after he slept with his old playfellow, Posthumus; dying at the age of forty. Love, in Falstaff only inferior to Quin, died also about this time. Under that pseudonym he saved his father, the City Architect, it was supposed, the disgrace that might attach to him, if his son called himself by his proper name (Dance) on the stage. Covent Garden, in losing Powell, lost one who was as ignorant as Mrs. Pritchard, but he had fine stage inspirations. Of the acquisitions made at this time, the most notable was that of Lewis, who first appeared at Covent Garden in the season of 1773–74 as Belcour, and in light tragic parts.

Playgoers felt that the old school of actors was breaking up, and the poets did little to render the finale illustrious. It was the dramatic era of Kelly and Goldsmith, both of them needy Irishmen, and hard-working literary men, having many things in common, except talent, but being especially antagonistic as the upholders—Kelly of sentimental, Gold-

smith of natural comedy. Kelly was the victor at first, for his "False Delicacy," of which few now know anything, brought him a little fortune, while Goldsmith's "Good-natured Man" would have made shipwreck but for Shuter's energy and humour. As I look over the records of this time, I cannot but remark how many of the dramatic poets toiled in vain. Taking, for instance, the tragic writers—Hoole, the watchmaker's son, is still an honoured name as a translator of the Italian poets, but his "Cyrus" and "Timanthes" are wrapped in oblivion. Some among us may still read the story of *Hindostan* written by one whose own story was as strange as that of *Gil Blas*, and who, driven upon the world as an adventurer, in consequence of a duel, in which he was a principal, rose from the condition of a common sailor to be Secretary to the Governor of Bencoolen, and a Lieutenant-Colonel. I allude to the Scotchman, Dow, at whose "Zingis" the public laughed, more than they shuddered,[1] and whose "Sethona" even the two Barrys could not render endurable, despite magnificent acting.[2]

Home fared as badly as Dow. There was a strong prejudice at this season against Scotchmen, and Home was obnoxious as a client of Lord Bute's. His "Fatal Discovery," an Ossianic subject, was mounted with Roman costumes and Greek scenery, and the audience threatened to burn the house down if the piece was

[1] "Zingis" was played eleven or twelve times, an indubitable proof of success.

[2] Played nine times.

not withdrawn![1] The silver tongue of Barry could not charm them into patience. Equally unsuccessful was Home's "Alonzo,"[2] the hero of which does not appear till the play is half over. Home sat by Barry's bed-side as the tragedy was being acted, and Mrs. Barry sent every half hour to say how she was, hoping the best and doing her utmost. But what could even that great actress do for a piece of which the story, as Walpole remarks, is that of David and Goliath, worse told than it would have been if Sternhold and Hopkins had put it into metre? His criticism is made in his happiest vein: "A gentlewoman embraces her maid, when she expects her husband. He goes mad with jealousy, without discovering what he ails, and runs away to Persia, where the post comes in from Spain, with news of a duel that is to be fought, the Lord knows when. As Persian princes love single combat as well as if they had been bred in Lucas's coffee-house, nobody is surprised that the Prince of Persia should arrive to fight a duel, that was probably over before he set out. The wife discovers the Prince to be her own husband, and the lad her own son, and so, to prevent mischief, stabs herself, and then tells the whole story, which it was rather more natural to do first. The language is as poor as the plot. Somebody asked me what prose Home had ever written. I said I knew none but his poetry."

Then, to a version of Voltaire's "Orestes," Mrs. Yates, as Electra, could not give life; and when Crad-

[1] Yet it was played ten times!

[2] "Alonzo" was a fairly successful play, being acted eleven times.

dock gave to her all the profits he derived from his tragedy of "Zobeide," he showed his sense of that lady's value. Kelly could give her nothing, for he gained nothing by his "Clementina," at which the audience yawned more than they hissed.[1] Managers seemed to understand little of the requirements of the public taste; and Colman still kept the Fool from "King Lear," as being "such a character in tragedy as would not be endured on the modern stage." In our own time, however, it has been not only endured, but enjoyed. One of the pleasantest of stage memories is connected with the Fool, as acted by Miss P. Horton, now Mrs. German Reed.

Garrick taxed all Barry's powers, for he imposed on him the part of Tancred, in perhaps the most insufferable of the tragedies of this time, the "Almida" of Mallett's daughter, Madame Celisia, which Garrick brought out only because her husband had been hospitable to him in Italy! Cumberland laid as heavy a charge on him in his emendation of "Timon," in which there was more of Cumberland and less of Shakspeare than the public could welcome. Walpole lets pass Murphy's imbroglio of "Alzuma," and his over-rated "Grecian Daughter," the success of which was due to the Barrys alone, as Evander and Euphrasia; but he records his impression of Mason's "Elfrida," which may joyously close the tragic register of this period.

[1] This conveys a very wrong impression, and is founded upon a reported speech of one particular person, who, when asked whether he had hissed, said, "How could I? A man can't hiss and yawn at the same time." The piece ran for nine nights, so Kelly must have made some money by it, and he got £200 from the booksellers for the copyright.

"It is wretchedly acted," he writes to the author (Mason), in February 1773,[1] "and worse set to music. The virgins were so inarticulate, that I should have understood them as well if they had sung choruses of Sophocles. Orgar (Clarke) had a broad Irish accent. I thought the first virgin, who is a lusty virago, called Miss Miller, would have knocked him down; and I hoped she would. Edgar (Bensley) stared at his own crown, and seemed to fear it would tumble off." Miss Catley looked so impudent, and so *manifestly* unlike the British virgin whom she was supposed to represent, "you would have imagined she had been singing the 'Black Joke,' only that she would then have been more intelligible. Smith did not play Athelwold ill. Mrs. Hartley is made for the part (Elfrida), if beauty and figure would suffice for what you write; but she has no one symptom of genius. Still, it is very affecting, and does admirably for the stage, under all these disadvantages. The tears came into my eyes, and streamed down the Duchess of Richmond's lovely cheeks." Those great folk must have been easily moved, or Mrs. Hartley must have had more talent than Walpole will acknowledge.

Of her beauty there is no doubt, nor of its effects. In Hull's poor tragedy, "Henry II.," she played Rosamond to the Henry of Smith; and this handsome couple went on making love to one another, on the stage, till they believed in it, and fairly ran away together. When Smith, in his older and wiser days, was living in well-endowed retirement, at Bury St.

[1] The letter is dated 19th November 1773.

Edmunds, a remark made by him, affirming the fidelity of his married life, caused his excellent wife to look up at him. He blushed; murmured something of having forgotten "*one* slip," and never boasted again. He had the grace of repentance.

Of comedies, and operas, and farces that have been forgotten, I will say nothing. Mrs. Lennox showed more dramatic power in her novels, and Mrs. Griffiths more good purpose in her hints to young ladies, than they did in their plays. O'Brien found his pieces condemned, through his adoption of the suggestions of his aristocratic friends. Bickerstaffe, ex-page to Lord Chesterfield, in Dublin, and an ex-officer of marines, not yet compelled to fly the country in dishonour, gained less renown by "Lionel and Clarissa" (Mattocks and Miss Macklin), of the entire originality of which he boasted, than he did by the "Padlock" (Mungo, by Dibdin), which he borrowed from the Spanish; or by the "Hypocrite" (Cantwell, by King), which was a refitting of Cibber's "Nonjuror," with the addition of Maw-worm. Kelly's sentimental comedies were only tolerated by the Wilks party, whom he had offended by his political writings, when they were brought forward under an assumed name, but they had not merit enough of their own to live. Even Cumberland's "West Indian" (Belcour, King; Major O'Flaherty, Moody), and his "Fashionable Lover" (Lord Abberville, Dodd; Aubrey, and Augusta Aubrey, by the Barrys), have departed from the scene, with his "Brothers." All Cumberland's *dénouements* may be conjectured before the curtain falls on his

second acts. Of the "Brothers," George Montagu writes to Walpole: "I am glad it succeeds, as he has a tribe of children, and is almost as extravagant as his uncle, and a much better man." Cumberland lacks that most at which he most aims, facility to delineate character. He has less power of style than purity of sentiment. Of his fifty-four pieces, one alone, the "Wheel of Fortune," survives. In all, he exhibits more regard for modesty than he furnishes matter for amusement.

But the one comedy of this period, which has gloriously survived all the rest, and which is being acted as I write, is Goldsmith's "She Stoops to Conquer." There is nothing in it of the mawkishness of Kelly nor of the pompous affectation of Cumberland. It was *so natural*, that those who did not despair, doubted of it; and the author himself had not the courage to believe in its success, though Johnson and a faithful few alone augured triumph. After a world of difficulty, the night of performance arrived at last,—the 15th of March 1773. From the Shakspeare tavern, Johnson led a band of friends to Covent Garden, where he sat in the front of a side box; and as he laughed, the applause increased. But the friendly approvers were occasionally indiscreet, despite the instructions of Cumberland, who very kindly asserts, that the success of the comedy was owing to the exertions of those *claqueurs*,—predetermined to secure a triumph!

It came, that triumph,—and to a rare son of genius; one, who showed that drollery was com-

patible with decency, and that high comedy could exist without scoundrelly fine gentlemen to support it. It gave good opportunities, also, to rising actors, who, on the refusal of Smith to play Young Marlow, and of Woodward to play Tony Lumpkin, were cast for those parts,—namely, Lee Lewes and little Quick. Goldsmith did not venture to go down to Covent Garden till the fifth act was on, and then he heard the one solitary hiss, which was the exception to the universal applause, and which has been variously ascribed as issuing from the envious lips of Kelly or of Kenrick.

Sentimental comedy, ridiculed by Foote at the Haymarket, in his "Handsome House Maid, or Piety in Pattens," was dethroned, for a period, by Goldsmith's comedy. It was time. Sentiment had been carried to its utmost limits a month or two before, in a little piece called "Rose." In this operatic drama, we find Lord Gainlove (Vernon) celebrating his twenty-first birthday, by inviting every marriageable lady within five miles. Each of them is to bring a rose; and my lord is to marry her who brings one that cannot decay. The roses are brought by all, save Serina (Mrs. Smith), who, on being questioned, remarks, that the only rose which never decays is virtue; and that *she* brings the imperishable flower! She is raised to the rank of Lady Gainlove, forthwith!

To a similar school belongs the "Maid of Kent," of Francis Godolphin Waldron. The piece has more of talk than of action in it. Waldron was a respectable

actor, a worthy bookseller, and an honest treasurer of the Theatrical Fund. A simple man—he once announced, in the country, that he would play Richard in humble imitation of the inimitable Mr. Garrick! Waldron was a Roman Catholic, and on publishing an appendix to his edition of Ben Jonson's "Sad Shepherd," he had the courage to recall public attention to the poems of Father Southwell, the martyr, of which he gave some specimens. Through him, and later editors, Southwell has become as one of those true and familiar friends who are cherished for their virtues, and are not questioned on account of their creeds.

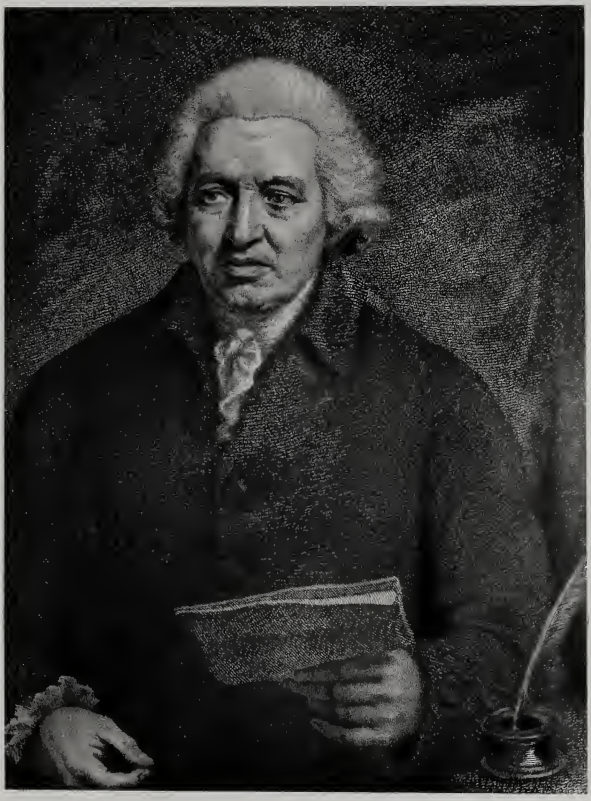
Perhaps one of the most important improvements in stage arrangements was made at Covent Garden, on the 23d of October 1773, when Macklin first appeared as Macbeth. The taste of the nation, according to Whitehead, depended on Garrick; but Garrick, like his predecessors, had been accustomed to dress the Thane in the uniform of a modern military officer. Shakspeare, in his mind's eye, saw the persons of this drama all in native costume, for Malcolm recognises Rosse, at a distance, for his countryman, by his dress. Macklin, bearing this in mind, dressed all the characters in Scottish suits; but unfortunately, he himself is said to have looked more like a rough old Scotch bagpiper, than the Thane of Cawdor, and King of Scotland. He hoped to snatch a triumph from Garrick, from Barry, and from Smith; and, indeed, in his scene with the witches, his interview with his wife, his hypocrisy

after the king's death, his bearing with the murderers, and in contrasts of rage and despondency, he gained great applause. In the other scenes he failed. On the first two nights there was occasionally a little sibilation, which Macklin attributed to Reddish and Sparks, whose friends headed a riot, which was ended by Macklin, on his third appearance in the character,[1] being driven from the stage, with much attending insult.

A few nights later he was announced for Shylock and Sir Archy Mac Sarcasm; but he could not obtain a hearing. Bensley, Woodward, and Colman treated with the enraged audience, in obedience to whose commands Mr. Macklin was declared to be discharged from the theatre. Against five of the rioters Macklin entered an action, and Lord Mansfield intimated that a jury would give heavy damages against men who had gone to the theatre with a preconceived resolution, not of judging of the merits, but of ruining an actor. Lord Mansfield ordered the case to be referred to a Master, with directions that liberal satisfaction be made; but Macklin interposed, offering to stop all further proceedings, if the defendants would pay the costs, spend £100 in tickets for his daughter's benefit, the same sum for his own, and a third for the advantage of the manager. And this was agreed to. "You have met with great applause to-day, Mr. Macklin," said Lord Mansfield; "you never acted better."

Let us now follow Garrick and Barry to the

[1] Should be his fourth appearance.



close of their professional courses, in 1776 and 1777, and make record of the principal productions which were brought forward during the last brilliant years of the first, and the majestic decline of the latter. At Drury Lane, came first Burgoyne's "Maid of the Oaks," as "fine as scenes could make it, and as dull as the author could not help making it," says Walpole. This was followed by Cumberland's "Choleric Man," the author of which, when accused of stealing a portion of it from Shadwell's "Squire of Alsatia," protested he had never seen that play! Dr. Franklin was as reluctant to acknowledge how much his "Matilda" owed to Voltaire's "Duc de Foix." All Walpole's affirmations that a better tragedy than Jephson's "Braganza" had not been seen for fifty years, could not give life to a heavy tragedy, by a man of such a comic turn of mind, that he was called "the mortal Momus." These pieces, with others of less note, were brought forward at Drury Lane, where Garrick appeared for the last time as Don Felix, in the "Wonder," on the 10th of June 1776.

He had been accustomed to take his share in the country dance with which this comedy used to end, with unabated vigour, down to the latest period; and he delighted in thus proving that his strength and spirits were unimpaired. On this final night the dance was omitted, and Garrick stepped forward, in front of a splendid and sympathising audience, to take his one and final farewell. For the first time in his life he was troubled, and at this emotion, the house was moved too, rather to tears than to applause.

He could pen farewell verses for others, but he could neither write nor deliver them for himself. In a few phrases, which were perhaps not so unpremeditated as they appeared to be, he bade his old world adieu! They were rendered in simple and honest prose. "The jingle of rhyme, and the language of fiction, would but ill suit my present feelings," he said; and his good taste was duly appreciated.

Of this season at Drury Lane, I will only notice here a link which connects this old time with the present, in the fact, that in the course of it the name of *Kean* (Moses Kean, the uncle of Edmund) appears to Glumdalca, and Mrs. Siddons made her first appearance in London, as Portia, to King's Shylock.

Meantime, at Covent Garden, the town damned, condoned, and finally crowned the "Rivals" of Sheridan; who showed that a young fellow of twenty-three could write a comedy, remarkable for wit, good arrangement of plot, and knowledge of men and manners. Hoole's dull "Cleonice," and Hull's as dull adaptation of Thomson's "Edward and Eleonora," were followed by the gayest and most popular of operas—Sheridan's "Duenna," which was acted seventy-five times in one season, eclipsing the glory even of the "Beggar's Opera." But the audiences were dulled again by Mason's "Caractacus," the acting of which Walpole styles "a barbarous exhibition." The chief part (given to Clarke), he cruelly says, "will not suffer in not being sputtered by Barry, who has lost all his teeth."

In Garrick's last season, he *looked* youthful parts as well as ever he did. It was the reverse with Barry, who gave up Douglas for Old Norval, and who was so ill, while dressing for Jaffier, that acting it seemed impossible; and yet the great player, at whom Walpole sneers, entered on the stage only to be inspired; he was warmed by the interest of the scene, and, brightening with the glow of love and tenderness, communicated his feelings to all around—but he fell almost into insensibility on reaching the green-room. He played Evander to Mrs. Barry's Euphrasia, on the 28th of December 1776[1]—the last time on which his name appeared in the bills. Death took him, and Shuter, and Woodward, close upon one another; but Garrick and Kitty Clive retired to enjoy a season of luxurious rest—Garrick at Hampton, and Mrs. Clive, between Margaret Woffington's grave, and Horace Walpole's mansion at Teddington.

The great actor, in his retirement, used to smile when his friends told him he had surpassed Betterton. Whether the smile showed he accepted the flattery or differed from the opinion, I do not know; but Garrick would remark, that Booth, in "Cato," had never been excelled; and yet, when Quin first played the part, the pit rang with "*Booth outdone!*" and *encored* the famous soliloquy,—an honour never enjoyed by either Betterton or Garrick. Let us now accompany the latter to Hampton, and, sojourning with him there, look back over his past career.

[1] It should be 28th November 1776.

GARRICK BETWEEN TRAGEDY AND COMEDY.

CHAPTER XIX.

DAVID GARRICK.

When Garrick commenced his career as actor, he was twenty-five years of age, and, according to Pond's portrait, a very handsome fellow. In the first burst of his triumph, Cibber thought the new player "well enough," but Foote, with the malice that was natural to him, remarked, "Yes, the hound has something clever, but if his excellence was to be examined, he would not be found in any part equal to Colley Cibber's Sir John Brute, Lord Foppington, Sir Courtly Nice, or Justice Shallow." This was said, not out of justice to Cibber, but out of ill-will against Garrick.

How he affected the town may be seen in the criticism of the *Daily Post*. "His reception was the most extraordinary and great that was ever known upon such an occasion, and we hear that he obliges the town this evening, with the same performance." The figure of Betterton looking down upon him from between Shakspeare and Dryden, on the ceiling of the theatre, may have stimulated him. Garrick's Hamlet placed him indisputably at the head of his profession, and his Abel Drugger and Archer fixed his pre-eminence in both low and light comedy. In the former comic part, he "extinguished" Theophilus Cibber, whose grimaces had been the delight of the gallery. Garrick's Abel was awkward, simple, and unobtrusive; there was neither grimace nor gesticulation in it, and he "convinced those who had seen him in Lear and Richard that there was nothing in human life that such a genius was not able to represent."

Walpole never liked him; and he laughed at the "airs of fatigue which Garrick and other players give themselves after a long part;"—comparing their labour with that of the Speaker and of some members of the House of Commons. The fine gentleman depreciated the fine actor systematically, but at the close of a score of years' familiarity with his acting, he rendered a discriminating judgment on him. "Good and various," the player was allowed to be, but other actors had pleased Walpole more, though "not in so many parts." "Quin in Falstaff, was as excellent as Garrick in Lear. Old Johnson far more natural in everything he attempted. Mrs. Porter surpassed him in passionate

tragedy. Cibber and O'Brien were what Garrick could never reach, coxcombs and men of fashion. Mrs. Clive is, at least, as perfect in low comedy, and yet, to me, Ranger was the part that suited Garrick the best of all he ever performed. He was a poor Lothario, a ridiculous Othello, inferior to Quin in Sir John Brute and Macbeth, and to Cibber in Bayes; and a woeful Lord Hastings and Lord Townley. Indeed, his Bayes was original, but not the true part; Cibber was the burlesque of a great poet, as the part was designed, but Garrick made it a Garretteer. The town did not like him in Hotspur, and yet I don't know if he did not succeed in it beyond all the rest. Sir Charles Williams and Lord Holland thought so too, and they were no bad judges." It was less fair criticism when Walpole wrote, with reference to Garrick, "I do not mention the things written in his praise;—because he writes most of them himself."

This last charge was also made in a pamphlet, said to have been by Foote. It is there asserted that Garrick had considerable share in the property, and great influence in the management, of the *Public Advertiser*, the *Gazetteer*, the *Morning Post*, and the *St. James's Chronicle*. The critical and monthly reviews, he found *means* (we are told) to keep in his interest. The *Gentleman's Magazine* and *London Review* alone withstood him. Quin and Mossop, living,—he is said to have hated; dead,—to have offered to bury their remains with unusual honours. The Barrys, King, Lee, Mrs. Abington, and others, he is said to have mimicked in private; by similar mimicry in public, he

is accused of having broken Delane's heart, and he is also charged with having ruined Powell, by binding him to beggarly-paid service, under a bond of £1000, and by exacting the heavy penalty when the terms were infringed. He is charged with damning his brethren with faint praise, and ridiculing the monotony of Mrs. Cibber's action; *he* who said that tragedy had died with her! It was laid as a meanness on him that he would not engage great actors,—at a time both the Barrys were in his company, drawing houses as great as could be drawn by his own powers. Wilkinson has asserted the youthfulness of his look and action to the last, but his anonymous detractors, while they allowed that, as Ranger, he mounted the ladder nimbly, professed to see that he was old about the legs. Is he a lover? they mock his wrinkled visage and lack-lustre eye, in which softness, they say, was *never* enthroned; his voice is hoarse and hollow, his dimples are furrows, his neck hideous, lips ugly, "the upper one, especially, is raised all at once like one turgid piece of leather." In such wise, was he described just before he left the stage; and to embitter his retirement, he is told that his worst enemy has got famous materials for his "Life!"

Garrick was proud of his Abel Drugger, but he was ready to acknowledge the superiority of Weston in that part, whose acting was described by Garrick as the finest he ever saw.[1] To this pleasant piece

[1] This is very doubtful. Cooke, who tells the story, merely says that Garrick pronounced Weston's Abel Drugger "one of the finest pieces of acting he ever saw."

of criticism was added a £20 note, on Weston's benefit night.

And yet, from first to last, did his enemies deny that Garrick was influenced by worthy motives. Walpole describes him, unjustly, as jealous (even after his retirement) of rising young players; and Horace writes, in 1777, "Garrick is dying of yellow jaundice, on the success of Henderson, a young actor from Bath. *Enfin donc désormais*, there must never be a good player again! As Voltaire and Garrick are the god and goddess of envy, the latter would put a stop to procreation, as the former would annihilate the traces of all antiquity, if there were no other gods but they."

I have quoted what Walpole said of the actor in his first year;—this is what he says of him in his last: "I saw Lear the last time Garrick played it, and as I told him, I was more shocked at the rest of the company than pleased with him,—which I believe was not just what he desired; but to give a greater brilliancy to his own setting, he had selected the very worst performers of his troop; just as Voltaire would wish there were no better poets than Thomson and Akenside." This is not true. Garrick played with Gentleman Smith and Bensley; Yates, Parsons, and Palmer; Mrs. Abington, Mrs. Yates, and, for a few nights, Mrs. Siddons.

Because Garrick never allowed his judgment to be overpowered by his emotions, intense as they were, Johnson thought there was all head and no heart in his acting. While David was once playing

Lear, Johnson and Murphy were at the wing, conversing in no subdued tone. As Garrick passed by them, he observed, "You two talk so loud, you destroy my feelings." "Punch has *no* feelings," growled Asper, contemptuously.

By pen, as well as by word of mouth, did Johnson wound the self-esteem of his friend. Although Boswell asserts that Garrick never forgave the pointed satire which Johnson directed against him, under the pseudonym of Prospero, the records of the actor's life prove the contrary. That it was something he could never entirely forget is true, for the assault was made under circumstances by which its bitterness was much aggravated. Garrick had, just before, manfully exerted himself to render Johnson's "Irene" successful. And on the 15th February 1752, on the morning of the night on which Garrick was to play Tancred, there appeared a paper in the *Rambler*, from Johnson's pen, in the two personages of which, no one could be mistaken. They are described as coming up to town together to seek a fortune, which had been found by one of them, Prospero, who was "too little polished by thought and conversation to enjoy it with elegance and decency!"

Asper then describes a visit he reluctantly pays to Prospero's house. He is tardily admitted, finds the stairs matted, the best rooms open, that he may catch a glance at their grandeur, while his friend conducts him into a back room, suited for inferior company—where Asper is received with all the insolence of con-

descension. The chairs and carpets are covered, but the corners are turned up that Asper may admire their beauty and texture. He did "not gratify Prospero's folly with any outcries of admiration, but coldly bade the footman let down the cloth."

The host gives the guest inferior tea, talks of his jeweller and silversmith, boasts of his intimacy with Lord Lofty, alludes to his chariot, and ladies he takes in it to the Park, and exhibits his famous Dresden china, which he "always associates with his chased tea-kettle." "When I had examined them a little," says Asper, "Prospero desired me to set them down, for they who were accustomed only to common dishes seldom handled china with much care." Asper takes credit for much philosophy in not dashing Prospero's "baubles to the ground;" and when the latter begins to affect a preference for the less distinguished position of one with whom he was "once upon the level," Asper quits the house in disgust.

This attack was ungracious and cowardly, on one side, as it was undeserved on the other. I can fancy it disturbed Garrick's performance of Tancred on that night; the *Rambler* was universally read, and the application could not fail. But it disturbed nothing else. Years later, when Johnson visited Garrick at his Hampton villa, the spirit of Asper was softened in his breast, and he was justified in the well-known remark he made, as he contemplated the beauty and grandeur around him:—"These are the things, Davy, that make death terrible!" It

must not be forgotten, however, that Johnson, at last, allowed no one to abuse Davy but himself, and he then always mentioned that "Garrick was the most liberal man of his day."

So great, indeed, was his honesty, too, that Garrick, having entered thoughtlessly into some bargain, carried it out with the remark, that "terms made over our cups must be as strictly observed as if I had agreed to them over tea and toast." His gallantry, also, was indisputable. When Mrs. Yates invited him to her house to discuss a treaty touching "£800 a year, and finding her own clothes," he answered, "I will be as punctual as I ought to be to so fine a woman, and so good an actress."

One of the critical years in the life of Garrick—of whom Chesterfield always strangely asserted, that although he was the best actor the world had ever seen, or could see, he was *poor in comedy!*—was 1746, when he and Quin first appeared together at Covent Garden in the "Fair Penitent:" the night was that of the 14th of November. "The 'Fair Penitent,'" says Davies, "presented an opportunity to display their several merits, though the balance was as much in favour of Quin as the advocate of virtue is superior in argument[1] to the defender of profligacy. . . . The shouts of applause when Horatio and Lothario met on the stage together, in the second act, were so loud and so often repeated before the audience permitted them to speak, that the comba-

[1] These two words—"in argument"—are not in Davies's fourth edition.

tants seemed to be disconcerted. It was observed that Quin changed colour, and Garrick seemed to be embarrassed; and it must be owned that these actors were never less masters of themselves than on the first night of the contest for pre-eminence. Quin was too proud to own his feelings on the occasion; but Mr. Garrick was heard to say, 'Faith, I believe Quin was as much frightened as myself.'"

Davies, who praises Mrs. Cibber in the heroine, states that competent judges decided that Quin found his superior on this occasion. By striving to do too much, he missed the mark at which he aimed. "The character of Horatio is compounded of deliberate courage, warm friendship, and cool contempt of insolence.[1] The last Quin had in a superior degree, but could not rise to an equal expression of the other two. The strong emphasis which he stamped on almost every word in a line, robbed the whole of that ease and graceful familiarity which should have accompanied the elocution and action of a man who is calmly chastising a vain and insolent[2] boaster. When Lothario gave Horatio the challenge, Quin, instead of accepting it instantaneously, with the determined and unembarrassed brow of superior bravery, made a long pause, and dragged out the words, 'I'll meet thee there!' in such a manner as to make it appear absolutely ludicrous." He paused so long before he spoke, that somebody, it was said, called out from the gallery, "Why don't you

[1] Davies (fourth edition) has "vice."
[2] Davies (fourth edition) has "audacious."

tell the gentleman whether you will meet him or no?"

But there is no one who gives us so lively a picture of the principal actors in this piece as Cumberland, who tells us that "Quin presented himself, upon the rising of the curtain, in a green velvet coat embroidered down the seams, an enormous full-bottomed periwig, rolled stockings, and high-heeled, square-toed shoes. With very little variation of cadence, and in a deep full tone, accompanied by a sawing kind of action, which had more of the senate than the stage in it, he rolled out his heroics with an air of dignified indifference that seemed to disdain the plaudits that were showered upon him. Mrs. Cibber, in a key high pitched but sweet withal, sang, or rather recitatived, Rowe's harmonious strain. But when, after long and eager expectation, I first beheld little Garrick, then young and light, and alive in every muscle and every feature, come bounding on the stage, and pointing at the wittol Altamont and the heavy-paced Horatio (heavens! what a transition), it seemed as if a whole century had been swept over in the space of a single scene; old things were done away, and a new order at once brought forward, bright and harmonious, and clearly destined to dispel the barbarisms and bigotry of a tasteless age too long attached to the prejudices of custom, and superstitiously devoted to the illusions of imposing declamation." Foote's imitation of Garrick's dying scene in Lothario was an annoyance to Garrick and a delight to the town, particularly at the concluding words :—

"adorns my tale, and che-che-che-che-che-cheers my heart in dy-dy-dy-dying."

Garrick was again superior to Quin, when playing Hastings to his Gloucester in "Jane Shore." Davies describes Quin as "a good commonwealth-man," for taking an inferior character, one which the actor himself used to designate as one of his "whisker-parts,"[1] a phrase which shows that he dressed the Duke as absurdly as he did Horatio.

Quin had his turn of triumph when he played Falstaff to Garrick's Hotspur. The former character he kept as his own, as long as he remained on the stage; but after a few nights, Garrick resigned Hotspur, on the ground of indisposition, to careful Havard. The two great actors agreed to appear together as Orestes and Pyrrhus, and Cassius and Brutus; but Garrick did not like the old costume of Greece or Rome, and the agreement never came to anything.

It was long the custom to compare the French actor Lekain with Garrick. The two had little in common, except in their resolution to tread the stage and achieve reputation by it. Lekain was born in 1729, the year in which Baron departed the stage. He was the son of a goldsmith, and had gained wide notice as a maker of delicate surgical instruments, when a passion for the stage led him, as in Garrick's case, to playing frequently in private, especially in Voltaire's little theatre, in the Rue Traversière, now known as the Rue Fontaine Molière.

[1] "Strut-and-whisker parts" is the expression used.

On this stage Lekain exhibited great powers, with defects, which were considered incurable; but he was only twenty years of age, and he could then move, touch, and attract the coldest of audiences. Voice, features, and figure were against him, and yet ladies praised the beauty of all, so cunning was the artist. He played Orosmane, in "Zaire," before Louis XV., and the King was angry to find that the actor could *compel* him to weep! When Voltaire first heard him, he threw his arms round Lekain, and thanked God for creating a being who could delight Voltaire by uttering bad verses! And yet Voltaire dissuaded him from taking to the stage; but when Voltaire saw in him the hero of his own tragedies, then poet and player lived but for one another, thought themselves France, and that the eyes of the world were upon them. Voltaire addressed Lekain as "Monsieur le Garrick of France, in merit though not in purse!" and as "My very dear and very great support of *expiring tragedy!*" When he wrote this in 1770, there was a boy seven years old in Paris, who, seventeen years later, began the most splendid career ever run by French actor,—as Seïde, in Voltaire's "Mahomet,"—Talma!

Garrick and Lekain equally respected the original text of an author; but the former, more readily than the latter, adopted so-called "emendations." When Marmontel *improved* the bold phrases of old Rotrou's "Venceslas," Lekain repeated the improvements at rehearsal, but at night he kept to the original passages of the author, and thus created confusion among

his fellow-actors, who lost their *cues*. In this, Garrick deemed him unjustifiable.

Lekain, like Betterton, never departed from the quality of the part he was playing, even when off the stage. Garrick, like Charles Young, would forget Lear, to set a group in the green-room laughing at some good story. Lekain treated his Paris audiences with contempt. He would affect fatigue after playing less than a dozen times in a single winter, and then pass from one country town to another, acting twice a day! He received a salary from Paris while he was acting at Brussels. He could not play a hundred different parts like Garrick, who identified himself with all; but he carried about with him a repertory of eight or nine characters, with half that number of costumes and a turban; and with these parts, painfully learnt and elaborately acted, he enthralled his audiences. Voltaire protests that Lekain's means were as great, and his natural truthfulness of acting as undeniable as Garrick's; "but, oh! sublime Garrick!" exclaims Mercier, "how much more extended are thy means; how different thy truthfulness!"

This truthfulness was the result of anxious care. Garrick spent two whole months in rehearsing and correcting his Benedick, and when he played it, all the gaiety, wit, and spirit seemed spontaneous.

In Fribble, he imitated no less than eleven men of fashion, so that every one recognised them; and in dancing Mrs. Woffington could not excel him.

"Garrick," says Mrs. Delaney, "is the genteelest dancer I ever saw."

One of Garrick's distinguishing characteristics was his power of suddenly assuming any passion he was called on to represent. This often occurred during his continental travels, when in the private rooms of his various hosts,—princes, merchants, actors,—he would afford them a taste of his quality; Scrub or Richard, Brute or Macbeth, and identify himself on the instant with that which he assumed to be. Clairon, the famous French actress, almost worshipped him for his good-nature, but more for his talent, particularly on the occasion when, in telling the story of a child falling from a window, out of its father's arms, he threw himself into the attitude, and put on the look of horror, of that distracted father. The company were moved to honest tears, and when the emotion had subsided, Clairon flung her arms round his neck, kissed him heartily, and then, turning to Mrs. Garrick, begged her pardon, for "she positively could not help it!"

Of the French players, Garrick said that Sophie Arnould was the only one who ever touched his heart. To a young Englishman of French descent, subsequently Lord North's famous antagonist, Colonel Barré, whom he met in Paris, he said, on seeing him act in private, that he might earn a thousand a year, if he would adopt playing as a profession.

French *ana* abound with illustrations of Garrick's marvellous talent, exercised for the mere joke's sake. How he deceived the driver of a *coucou* into believing

his carriage was full of passengers, Garrick having presented himself half a dozen times at the door, each time with a different face; how he and Preville, the French actor, feigned drunkenness on horseback; and how Garrick showed that his rival, drunk everywhere else, was not drunk enough in his legs. But the greatest honour Garrick ever received was in his own country, and at the hands of Parliament. He happened to be sole occupant of the gallery in the Commons, one night of 1777, during a very fierce discussion between two members, one of whom, noticing his presence, moved that the gallery should be cleared. Burke thereupon sprang to his feet, and appealed to the House; was it consistent with becomingness and liberality to disturb the great master of eloquence? one to whom they all owed so much, and from whom he, Burke, had learned many a grace of oratory? In his strain of ardent praise, he was followed by Fox and Townshend, who described the ex-actor as their great preceptor; and ultimately, Garrick was exempted from the general order that strangers leave the House! Senators hailed him as their teacher, and the greatest of French actors called him "*Master!*"

It was Grimm's conclusion, that he who had not seen Garrick, could not know what acting was. Garrick alone had fulfilled all that Grimm's imagination could conceive an actor should be. The player's great art of identification astounded him. In different parts he did not seem the same man; and Grimm truly observed, that all the changes in Garrick's features

arose entirely from inward emotion;—that he never exceeded truth; and that, in passion alone, he found the sources of distinction. "We saw him," he says, "play the dagger scene in 'Macbeth,' in a room, in his ordinary dress, without any stage illusion; and as he followed with his eyes the air-drawn dagger, he became so grand, that the whole assembly broke into a general cry of admiration. Who would believe," he asks, "that this same man, a moment after, counterfeited, with equal perfection, a pastry-cook's boy, who, carrying a tray of tartlets on his head, and gaping about him at the corner of the street, lets his tray fall in the kennel, and at first stupefied by the accident, bursts at last into a fit of crying?" Such was he who fairly frightened Hogarth himself, by assuming the face of the defunct Fielding!

Garrick's assertion, that a man must be a good comic actor to be a great tragedian, gave M. de Carmontelle the idea of a picture, in which he represented Garrick in an imposing tragic attitude, with a comic Garrick standing between the folding-doors, looking with surprise, and laughing at the other. While the ever-restless actor was sitting for this, he amused himself by passing through imperceptible gradations, from extreme joy to extreme sadness, and thence to terror and despair. The actor was running through the scale of the passions.

Grimm approvingly observed, that Garrick's "studio" was in the crowded streets. "He is always there," writes Grimm; and, no doubt, Garrick

perfected his great talents by the profound study of nature. Of his personal appearance, the same writer remarks: "His figure is *mediocre;* rather short than tall; his physiognomy agreeable, and promising wit; and the play of his eyes prodigious. He has much humour, discernment, and correctness of judgment; is naturally *monkeyish,* imitating all he sees; and he is always graceful!" Such is the account by a member of a society, whose kindness was never forgotten by the English actor. The desire to see him there again was as strong as Mrs. Woffington's, who, being reminded by Sir C. Hanbury Williams, that she had seen Garrick that morning, exclaimed, "but that's an age ago!"[1]

St. Petersburg caught from Paris the Garrick fever; but the offer of the Czarina Catherine, to give Garrick two thousand guineas for four performances, could not tempt him to the banks of the Neva. Denmark was fain to be content with his counterfeit presentment; and a portrait, painted in London, by order of the King was hung up in the royal palace at Copenhagen.

I have alluded to some things his enemies laid to his charge. They are small matters when they come to be examined; and the more they are examined, the less obnoxious does Garrick seem to censure.

I find more instances of his generosity than of his meanness—more of his fairness of judgment than of

[1] This is a very mild version of the story, which may be found in John Taylor's "Records of my Life." Lord Darnley, not Sir Hanbury Williams, was the hero.

his jealousy. He was ever ready to play for the benefit of his distressed brethren. When Macklin lost his engagement under Fleetwood, Garrick offered to allow him £6 per week out of his own salary till he found occupation. He saw, when his own triumph was in its freshness and brilliancy, the bright promise of Barry; and pointed out its great merits, and predicted his future success. To insure that of young Powell, he gave him frequent instruction; and when he brought the soon-forgotten Dexter from Dublin, he not only gave him "first business," and useful directions, but expressed his convictions that, with care and diligence, he would stand in the foremost rank of actors.

The commonest incidents have been tortured to depreciate Garrick's character. When, in 1775, Sheridan's "Duenna" was in the course of its first run of seventy-five nights, the name of the author was extraordinarily popular. At this juncture Garrick did further honour to that name by reviving the "Discovery," by Sheridan's mother, and acting the principal part in it himself.[1] The carpers immediately exclaimed, that the mother had been revived in opposition to the son. They did not even take the low ground of the revival being adopted as a source of profit on account of the author's family name.

Even Mrs. Siddons's disparagement of Garrick tells in his favour. She played two or three nights

[1] On 20th January 1776. Garrick was the original representative of Sir Anthony Branville, the part alluded to.

with him, but her first appearances were comparatively failures. Garrick observed some awkward action of the lady's arms, and he gave her good advice how to use them. But Mrs. Siddons, in telling the story, used to say: "He was only afraid that I should overshadow his nose." Years subsequently Walpole remarked this very action of the arms, which Garrick had endeavoured to amend!

To those who object that Garrick was personally vain, it may suffice to point out that he was the first to allude to his own defect of stature. In the prologue to the tragedy of "Hecuba," written and spoken by himself, he mentions the high-soled buskins of the ancient stage; and adds—

> "Then rais'd on stilts, our play'rs would stalk and rage,
> And at three steps stride o'er a modern stage;
> Each gesture then would boast unusual charms,
> From lengthen'd legs, stuff'd body, sprawling arms!
> Your critic eye would then no pigmies see,
> But buskins make a giant e'en of me."

If he esteemed little of himself personally, he had, on the other hand, the highest estimation of his profession. In this he bears a resemblance to Montfleury, who, being asked, when his marriage articles were preparing, how he wished to be described, answered: that ancestry conferred no talent, and that the most honourable title he desired to be known by, was, that of "*Actor to the King.*"

Garrick was often severe enough with conceited aspirants, who came to offer samples of their quality, to whom he listened while he shaved, and whom he often interrupted by imitative *yaw, yaws!* But when

convinced there was stuff in a young man, Garrick helped him to do his best, without thought of rivalry. It is pleasant thus to contemplate him preparing Wilkinson, in 1759, for his attempt at tragedy, in Bajazet, to the Arpasia of Mrs. Pritchard.[1] Garrick heard him recite the character in his own private room; gave him some valuable advice; presided at the making up of his face; and put the finishing strokes of the pencil, to render the young face of one and twenty as nearly like that of the elder Oriental, as might be.

It may be said that this was a cheap sort of generosity, but it was characteristic of kindliness of heart. He could make other and nobler sacrifices; on the last night he ever trod the stage, with a house crammed, with a profusely liberal audience, Garrick made over every guinea of the splendid receipts, not to his own account at his bankers, but to that of the Theatrical Fund. After this, his weaknesses may surely be forgotten. He may have been as restless and ignorant as Macklin has described him; as full of contrasts and as athirst for flattery as the pencil of Goldsmith has painted him; as void of literary ability as Johnson and Walpole asserted him to be; and as foolish as Foote would have us take him for; his poor opinion of Shuter and Mrs. Abington may seem to cast reproach upon his judgment; and his failure to impress Jedediah Buxton, who counted his words rather than attended to his acting, may be accepted as proof that he was a poor player (in Jedediah's eyes); but the

[1] It is in connection with this preparation that Wilkinson gives the peculiarly indecent specimen of Garrick's humour.

closing act of his professional life may be cited in testimony of a noble and unselfish generosity. It was the crowning act in a career marked by many generous deeds, but marred by many crosses, vexations, and anxieties.

Colman, even before he quarrelled with Garrick, assailed him as a "grimace-maker," a "haberdasher of wry faces," a "hypocrite who laughed and cried for hire," and so forth; but Garrick, in return, wrote verses in praise of Colman's translation of *Terence;* and when these had softened the translator's resentment, Garrick chose the most solemn and most joyous day, Christmas, 1765, to write better verses, in which he states that failing in health, assailed by enemies, treated with ingratitude, and weary of his vocation as he is, that joyous season is made doubly joyous by the restoration of their friendship.

Garrick could yield, too, to the most exacting of his rivals. When Barry rather unjustly complained that Garrick only put him up to play on unlucky days—when operas, or concerts, or lady's drums, were a counter attraction, David kindly bade him select his own days; he himself would be content to play singly on the others. "Well, sir!" said Barry, "I certainly could not ask more than you grant!"

Vanity, it has been said, was one of Garrick's weak points; but he was not so proud of the Prince of Hesse talking with him at Ranelagh, as people were of Mr. Garrick telling them what the Prince had said. His courtesy, discretion, justice, and firmness are illustrated in a thousand ways, in his

correspondence. His best actresses vexed him to the heart; but he never lost his temper or his politeness with the most vexing or capricious of them all. His counsel to young actors grasping at fame, was of the frank and useful nature which was likely to help them to seize it; and his reproof to foolish and impertinent players,—like the feather-brained Cautherley,—was delivered with a severity which must have been all the more stinging, as its application was as dignified as it was merciless. As for Garrick's professional jealousy, he seems to me to have had as little as was consonant with human nature. I know of no proprietor of a theatre, himself an actor, who collected around him such a brilliant brotherhood of actors as Garrick did; yet, when any one of these left him, or was dismissed by him, the partizans of the retiring player raised the cry of "*jealousy!*"

When Mallet was writing his *Life of the Duke of Marlborough*, he dexterously enough intimated to Roscius that he should find an opportunity of noticing in that work the great actor of the later day. The absurdity of this must have been evident to Garrick, who immediately replied, "My dear friend, have you quite left off writing for the stage?" As Mallet subsequently offered to Garrick his reconstruction of the masque of "Alfred," which he had originally written in conjunction with Thomson, and Garrick produced the piece, it has been inferred that the latter took the bait flung for him by the wily Scot. It seems to me that Garrick

perceived the wile, but produced the play, notwithstanding.

There was, perhaps, weakness of character rather than frankness, in the way he would allude to his short stature,—in his obviating jokes on his marriage, by making them himself, or getting his friend, Edward Moore, to make them, not in the most refined fashion. Sensitive to criticism no doubt he was; but he was more long-suffering under censure than Quin, who pummelled poor Aaron Hill in the Court of Requests, because of adverse comments in the *Prompter*. Sensitive as Garrick was, he could reply to criticism merrily enough. Another Hill, the doctor and dramatist, had attacked his pronunciation, and accused him of pronouncing the *i* in *mirth* and *birth* as if it were an *u*. On which Garrick wrote:—

> "If 'tis true, as you say, that I've injured a letter,
> I'll change my note soon, and I hope, for the better.
> May the just rights of letters as well as of men,
> Hereafter be fixed by the tongue and the pen;
> Most devoutly I wish that they both have their due,
> And that I may be never mistaken for U."

Again, if he were vain, he could put on a charming appearance of humility. Lord Lyttleton had suggested to him that, as a member of Parliament, he might turn his powers of eloquence to patriotic account. Such a suggestion would have fired many a man's ambition—it only stirred Garrick to write the following lines:

> "More than content with what my labours gain;
> Of public favour tho' a little vain;
> Yet not so vain my mind, so madly bent,
> To wish to play the fool in Parliament;

In each dramatic unity to err,
Mistaking TIME, and PLACE, and CHARACTER!
Were it my fate to quit the mimic art,
I'd 'strut and fret' no more, in *any* part;
No more in public scenes would I engage,
Or wear the cap and mask, on any stage."

Burke said of Garrick, that he was the first of actors, because he was the most acute observer of nature that Burke ever knew. Garrick disliked characters in which there was a "lofty disregard of nature;" yet he resembled Mrs. Siddons in believing that if a part seemed at all *within* nature, it was not to be doubted but that a great actor could make something out of it.

Garrick's repertory extended to less than one hundred characters, of which he was the original representative of thirty-six. Compared with the half century of labour of Betterton, and the number of his original characters, Garrick's toil seems but mere pastime. In his first season, on that little but steep stage at Goodman's Fields, so steep, it is said, that a ghost in real armour, ascending on a trap, once lost his balance and rolled down to the orchestra, Garrick seems to have been uncertain whether his vocation lay more with tragedy or with comedy. In that season he repeated his comic characters eighty-four times; he appeared but fifty nights in a repetition of half-a-dozen tragic parts.[1] In the sum of the years of his acting, the increase of number is slightly on the side of the latter, while, of his original characters, twenty belong to tragedy, and

[1] I cannot reconcile these figures with the bills.

sixteen to comedy. After he had been two-and-twenty years on the stage, Garrick undertook no new study.

Of his original characters, the best remembered in stage traditions are, Sharp, in the "Lying Valet," Tancred, Fribble, Ranger, Beverley, Achmet ("Barbarossa"), Oroonoko (in the altered play), Lovemore ("Way to Keep Him"), and Oakley, in the "Jealous Wife." Of these, only Beverley and Oakley can be said to still survive.

Of Garrick and his labours I have now said enough; let us follow him thither where he found repose from the latter, in company with one whom many of us, who are not yet old, may remember to have seen in our early youth, the Mrs. Garrick who is said to have told Edmund Kean that he could not play Abel Drugger, and to have been answered by Edmund, "Dear madam, I know it!"

In June 1749, Lord Chesterfield, who, in his Irish viceroyalty, had neglected Garrick, just as in London he ignored Sheridan whom he had patronised in Dublin, wrote to his friend Dayrolles, "The parliament is to be prorogued next Tuesday, when the ministers will have six months' leisure to quarrel, and patch up, and quarrel again. Garrick and the Violetti will likewise, and about the same time, have an opportunity of doing the same thing, for they are to be married next week. They are, at present, desperately in love with each other. Lady Burlington was, at first, outrageous; but, upon cooler reflection upon what the Violetti, if provoked, might say or rather invent, she consented to the match, and

superintends the writings." Later in June, Walpole touches on the same subject to Mann, announcing the marriage itself "first at a Protestant, then at a Roman Catholic Chapel. The chapter of this history," he adds, "is a little obscure, and uncertain as to the consent of the protecting countess, and whether she gives a fortune or not."

This Eva Maria Violetti was a dancer, who, three years previously to this marriage, was enchanting the town with her "poetry of motion." The sister Countesses of Burlington and Talbot competed for her with "sullen partiality." The former carried her to Chiswick, wore her portrait,[1] and introduced her to her friends. Lady Carlyle entertained her; and the Prince of Wales paid his usual compliment, by bidding her take lessons of Desnoyers, the dancing master, and Prince's companion,—which Eva Maria did not care to do.

The public were curious to know who this beautiful young German dancer was, in whom Lord and Lady Burlington took such especial interest. That she was nearly related to the former was a very popular conjecture. However this may have been, she was, in many respects, Garrick's good genius, presiding gracefully over his households in the Adelphi and at Hampton.

"Mr. Garrick," whose early residence was, according to the addresses of his letters, "at a perriwig maker's, corner of the Great Piazza, Covent Garden,"

[1] Walpole's expression is "is having her picture," which, as I understand it, does not mean wearing her portrait.

saw good company at Hampton, where Walpole cultivated an intimacy with him, for Mrs. Clive's sake, as he pretended. Here is the actor at home, on August 15th, 1755. "I dined to-day at Garrick's," writes Walpole to Bentley; "there were the Duke of Grafton, Lord and Lady Rochford, Lady Holdernesse, the crooked Mostyn, and Dabreu, the Spanish minister; two regents, of which one is Lord Chamberlain, the other Groom of the Stole, and the wife of a Secretary of State. This being *sur un assez bon ton*, for a player. Don't you want to ask me how I liked him? Do want, and I will tell you. I like *her* exceedingly; her behaviour is all sense, and all sweetness too. I don't know how, he does not improve so fast upon me; there is a great deal of parts, and vivacity, and variety, but there is a great deal, too, of mimicry and burlesque. I am very ungrateful, for he flatters me abundantly; but, unluckily, I know it."

Fifteen years later, Mrs. Delaney describes a day at Garrick's house at Hampton, and speaks as eulogistically of the hostess. "Mr. Garrick did the honours of his house *very respectfully*, and, though in high spirits, seemed sensible of the honour done them. Nobody else there but Lady Weymouth and Mr. Bateman. As to Mrs. Garrick, the more one sees her, the better one must like her; she seems *never* to depart from a perfect propriety of behaviour, accompanied with good sense and gentleness of manners; and I cannot help looking on her as a *wonderful creature*, considering all circumstances

relating to her." The above words referring to Garrick are held by Lady Llanover, the editor of Mrs. Delaney's correspondence, to be "high testimony to Garrick's tact and good-breeding, as few persons in his class of life know how to be '*respectful*,' and yet in '*high spirits*,' which is the greatest test of real refinement." This is severe, oh! gentlemen players; but the lady forgot that Mr. Garrick was the son of an officer and a gentleman.

Walpole warned people against supposing that he and Garrick were intimate. When the actor and his wife went to Italy:—"We are sending to you," wrote Horace to Mann, "the famous Garrick and his once famous wife. He will make you laugh as a mimic; and as he knows *we* are great friends, will affect great partiality to me; but be a little upon your guard, remember he is an *actor*." It is clear that Garrick, down at his villa, insisted on being treated as a gentleman. "This very day," writes Walpole to Mason, September 9,[1] 1772, "Garrick, who has dropped me these three years, has been here by his own request, and told Mr. Raftor how happy he was at the reconciliation. I did not know we had quarrelled, and so omitted being happy too."

Lord Ossory's intimacy with Garrick was one of the strictest friendship. Lord Ossory speaks of him, Gibbon, and Reynolds, who were then his guests, as all three delightful in society. "The vivacity of the great actor, the keen, sarcastic wit of the great historian, and the genuine pleasantry of the great

[1] September 19.

painter, mixed up well together, and made a charming party. Garrick's mimicry of the mighty Johnson was excellent."

Garrick was the guest of Earl Spencer, Christmas 1778, when he was attacked by his last and fatal illness. He was carried to his town house, No. 5 Adelphi Terrace, where Dr. Cadogan asked him if he had any affairs to settle. Garrick met the intimation with the calm dignity of Quin: "I have nothing of that sort on my mind," he said, "and I am not afraid to die."

Physicians assembled around him out of pure affection and respect; Heberden, Warren, and Schomberg. As the last approached, Garrick, placidly smiling, took him by the hand, faintly murmuring, "though last, not least in our dear love." But as the crowd of charitable healers increased, the old player who—wrapped in a rich robe, himself all pale and feeble, looked like the stricken Lusignan, softly repeated the lines in the "Fair Penitent," beginning with,

"Another and another still succeeds."

On January 20th, 1779, Garrick expired. Young Bannister, the night before, had played his old part of Dorilas to the Merope of Miss Younge. The great actor was solemnly carried to Westminster Abbey by some of the noblest in the land, whether of intellect or of rank. Chatham had addressed him living, in verse, and peers sought for the honour of supporting the pall at his funeral. The players,

whose charitable fund he had been mainly instrumental in raising to near £5000, stood near their master's grave, to which the statue of Shakspeare pointed, to do him honour. Amid these, and friends nearer and dearer still, the greatest of English actors, since Betterton, was left in his earthly sleep, not very far from his accomplished predecessor.

They who had accused him of extravagance were surprised to find that he had lived below his income. They who had challenged him with parsimony, now heard of large sums cheerfully given in charity, or lent on personal security; and the latter often forgiven to the debtor. "Dr. Johnson and I," says Boswell, "walked away together. We stopped a little while by the rails of the Adelphi, looking on the Thames, and I said to him with some emotion, that I was now thinking of two friends we had lost, who once lived in the buildings behind us—Topham Beauclerk and Garrick." "Ay, sir," said he tenderly, "and two such friends as cannot be supplied."[1]

And Mrs. Garrick? She wore her long widowhood till 1822, dying then in the same house on the Adelphi Terrace. She was the honoured guest of hosts whom all men honoured; and at the Bishop of London's table held her own against the clever men and women who held controversy under Porteus's roof. Eva Maria Garrick twice refused Lord Monboddo, who had written a book to show that humanity was merely apedom without the tail. The

[1] Full justice has been done to Garrick's character by modern dramatic historians, and notably by Mr. Percy Fitzgerald.

widow of Roscius was higher in the social scale than the wife of a canny Scotch Lord of Session, with an uncanny theory.

As I take leave of Garrick, I remember the touching scene which occurred on the last night but one of his public performances. His farewell to the stage was made in a comic character; but he and tragedy parted for ever the night before. On that occasion he played Lear to the Cordelia of Miss Younge. As the curtain descended, they lay on the stage hand in hand, and hand in hand they rose and went, Garrick silently leading, to his dressing-room; whither they were followed by many of the company. There stood Lear and Cordelia, still hand in hand, and mute. At last Garrick exclaimed, "Ah, Bessie, this is the last time I shall ever be your father; the *last time!*" and he dropped her hand. Miss Younge sighed too, and replied affectionately, with a hope that before they finally parted he would kindly give her a father's blessing. Garrick took it as it was meant, seriously; and as Miss Younge bowed her head, he raised his hands, and prayed that God would bless her! Then slowly looking round, he murmured, "May God bless you all!" and divesting himself of his Lear's dress, tragedy, and one of her most accomplished sons, were dissevered for ever!

In New Drury, such compliment was not paid to Garrick as was offered to Betterton in New Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre; on the ceiling of which house was painted a noble group of poets—Shakspeare, Rare Ben, Beaumont, Fletcher, and some of later

date. These were on a raised terrace, and a little below them, looking up, stood Betterton, with whom they were holding conference. Worthier homage was never rendered to departed merit! From him to whom it was rendered, and from Garrick who deserved no less, let us now turn to one who, lingering somewhat longer on the stage, yet earlier passing from the scene of life, claims a parting word,—silver-toned Barry.

Mr. Garrick as Sir John Brute.

MR. AND MRS. BARRY IN "TAMERLANE."

CHAPTER XX.

SPRANGER AND ANNE BARRY.

Outside the five-and-thirty years of Barry's professional life, little is known of him. As of Betterton, it may be said, he laboured, loved, suffered losses, and died. It is the sum of many a man's biography.

Spranger's professional career is traced in preceding pages; but I may add to it, that Dublin is to this day, and with reason, proud of Spranger Barry, and of Margaret Woffington; for mere human beauty they have never been surpassed; for talents and for genius, with respect to their profession, they have not often been equalled. Spranger of the silver tongue, was

the only actor who ever shook Garrick on his throne; but lacking the fulness of the perfection of Garrick, Barry only shook him for an instant; he never dethroned him. He is remembered as the vanquished wrestler is remembered, who has wrestled his best, given a heavy fall or two, has succumbed in the last grapple, and is carried from the arena on loving arms, amid the acclamations of the spectators, and with the respect of his conqueror.

In the Irish silversmith's accomplished son, born in 1719, there was very good blood, with some of the disadvantages attached to that possession. Of fine personal appearance and bearing, an aristocratic expression, and a voice that might win a bird from the nest, Spranger Barry had expensive and too magnificent tastes. He was a gentleman; but he lived as though he were the lord of countless thousands, and with an income on which an earl might have existed becomingly, with moderate prudence, Spranger Barry died poor.

From the very first, Barry took foremost ground; and Mrs. Delaney may well expatiate on the delight of seeing Garrick, Barry, and Sheridan together in one piece. Such a triad as those three were, when young, in the very brightest of their powers, and achieving triumphs which made their hearts beat to accomplish something higher still, perhaps, never rendered a stage illustrious.

From 1747 to 1758, Barry was, in some few characters, the best actor on our stage. After the above period, came the brilliant but ruinous Irish specula-

tion with Woodward. During the time of that disastrous Dublin management, Barry's powers were sometimes seriously affected. He has been depicted as reckless; but it is evident that anxieties were forced upon him, and a proud man liable to be seized by sheriffs' officers, ere he could rise from simulated death upon the stage, was not to be comforted by the readiness of his subordinates to murder the bailiffs. Mrs. Delaney had been enraptured with him in his earliest years; but she found a change in him even as early as 1759. The gossiping lady thus exhibits to us the interior of Crow Street, one night in February, of the year just named, when, despite the lady's opinion, the handsome and manly fellow was not to be equalled in the expression of grief, of pity, or of love.

"Now what do you think? Mrs. Delaney with *ditto* company went to the *Mourning Bride* to see the new playhouse; and Mrs. Fitzhenry performed the part of Zara, which I think she does incomparably. The house is very handsome, and well lighted; and there I saw Lady Kildare and her two blooming sisters, Lady Louisa Conolly (the bride) and Lady Sarah Lennox,"—(the latter lady reckoned among the first loves of George III.),—"who I think the prettiest of the two. Lord Mornington" (afterwards father of the Duke of Wellington) "was at the play, and looked as *solemn* as one should suppose the young lady he is engaged to" (Miss Hill) "would have done! . . . The play, on the whole, was tolerably acted, though I don't like *their*

celebrated Mr. Barry; he is tall and ungainly, and does not speak sensibly nor look his part well; he was Osmyn. Almyra was acted by a very pretty woman, who, *I think*, might be made a *very good actress*. Her name is Dancer."

Barry *did* make her an excellent actress, and his wife to boot. Nevertheless, the Dublin speculation failed; and I find something characteristic of it among the properties enumerated in the inventory of articles made over by Barry to his successor, Ryder. For instance:—"Chambers, with holes in them;" "House, very bad;" "One stile, broke;" "Battlements, torn;" "Garden wall, very bad;" "Waterfall, in the Dargle, very bad." The same definition is applied to much more property; with "woods, greatly damaged;" "clouds, little worth;" "wings, with holes, in the canvas;" or, "in bad order." "Mill, torn;" "elephant, very bad;" and Barry's famous "Alexander's car," is catalogued as "some of it wanting." Indeed, the only property in good order, comprised eighty-three thunderbolts!

Of Barry's wardrobe, he seems to have parted only with the "bonnet, bow, and quiver, for Douglas;" but Mrs. Barry's was left in Crow Street. It consisted of a black velvet dress and train; nine silk and satin dresses, of various hues, all trained; numerous other dresses, of inferior material; and "a pair of shepherd's breeches," which Boaden thinks were designed "for the dear woman's own Rosalind, no doubt."

The only known portraits of Barry represent him

as Timon and Macheath. They were taken before he entered upon his last ten years, in London;—years of gradual, noble, but irresistible decay. Like Betterton, Barry suffered excruciatingly from attacks of gout; but, like Betterton, and John Kemble in this respect resembled them both,—he performed in defiance of physical pain: mind triumphing over matter.

On the 8th of October 1776, he played Jaffier to the Pierre of Aikin, and the Belvidera of his wife. He was then only fifty-seven years of age; but there was a wreck of all his qualities,—save indomitable will. The noble vessel only existed in ruins, but it presented a majestic spectacle still. Barry, on the stage, was almost as effective as he had ever been; but, off the charmed ground, he succumbed to infirmity and lay insensible, or struggling, or waiting mournfully for renewal of strength between the acts. He continued ill for many weeks, during which his chief characters passed into the hands of Lewis, the great-grandson of Harley's secretary, Erasmus Lewis, but himself the son of a London linendraper. Lewis, who had now been three years on the London stage, played Hamlet, and Norval, Chamont, Mirabel, Young Bevil, and Lord Townley; but on the 28th of November, Barry roused himself, as if unwilling that the young actor, who had excelled Mossop in Dublin, should overcome, in London, the player who had competed, not always vainly, with Garrick. On that night, as I have already recorded, he played Evander to his wife's Euphrasia, in the "Grecian Daughter;" but he never played or spoke on the stage again.

On January 10th, 1777, he died, to the great regret of a world of friends and admirers, and to the awakening of much poetry of various quality. One of the anonymous sons of the Muse, in a quarto poem, remarks :—

"Scarcely recovered from the stroke severe,
When Garrick fled from our admiring eyes,
Resolv'd no more the Drama's sons to cheer,
To make that stroke more fatal,—Barry dies.

He dies: and with him sense and taste retreat;
For, who can now conceive the Poet's fire?
Express the just? the natural? the great?
The fervid transport? or the soft desire?"

The poet then fancies gathering around the player's tomb, led thither by the Tragic Muse,—the Moor, "with unrivall'd grace;" ill-fated Antony; injured Theseus; feeble Lusignan; woe-stricken Evander; heart-bleeding Jaffier; and, chief of all, Romeo, with "melting tears," "voice of love and soothing eloquence." Thalia, too, brings in Bevil and Townley;—

"And oh! farewell, she cries, *my graceful son!!*"

Graceful, but pathetic as he was graceful. This was especially the case when, in his younger days, he played with Mrs. Cibber,—Castalio to Monimia,—at which a comic actor, once looking on, burst into tears, and was foolish enough to be ashamed of it. No two (so critics thought) played lover and mistress, wife and husband, as they did. Mrs. Cibber, said these critics, who forgot her Beatrice to Garrick's Benedick, could, with equal, though different effect, be only the daughter or sister to Garrick;—Cordelia to Garrick's Lear, but

a Juliet to Barry's Romeo, a Belvidera to his Jaffier. When Mrs. Bellamy acted with him, the effect was less complete. Colley Cibber was in the house on the night of his first appearance as Othello—did what he was not accustomed to do,—applaud loudly; and is said to have preferred Barry, in this character, to either Betterton or Booth. In Orestes, Barry was so incomparable, that Garrick never attempted the part in London. His Alexander lost all its bombast, in his hands, and gained a healthy vigour; while, says Davies, "he charmed the ladies repeatedly, by the soft melody of his love complaints, and the noble ardour of his courtship." The grace of his exit and entrance was all his own; though he took lessons in dancing, from Desnoyers, to please the Prince of Wales.

Barry was a well-informed man, had great conversational powers, and told an Irish story with an effect which was only equalled by that with which he acted Sir Callaghan O'Brallaghan. In that accomplishment and this character, Garrick owned that Barry was not to be approached; but, said the former, "I can beat Barry's head off in telling all stories, but Irish ones."

It was in pathos on the stage, not in humour off it, that Barry excelled. "All exquisitely tender or touching writing," says an anonymous contemporary, "came mended from his mouth. There was a pathos, a sweetness, a delicacy, in his utterance, which stole upon the mind, and forced conviction on the memory. Every sentiment of honour and virtue, recommended to the ear by the language of the author, were rivetted to the heart by the utterance of Barry." Excessive

sensibility conquered his powers. His heart overcame his head; but Garrick never forgot himself in his character. Barry felt all he uttered, before he made his audience feel; but Garrick made his audience feel, and was not overcome by his own emotions.

Churchill describes the lofty and admired Barry as possessing a voice too sweet and soft for rage, and as going wrong through too much pains to err. The malignant bard alludes to the "well-applauded tenderness" of his Lear; to the march of his speeches, line by line; to his preventing surprise by preparatory efforts; and to his artificial style, manifest alike in his passions as in his utterance. This dark portrait was limned with the idea that it would please Garrick, whom it could *not* please. The two actors respected each other. "You have already," writes Barry, in 1746, to Garrick, "made me happy by your friendship. It shall be the business and pleasure of my life to endeavour to deserve it; and I would willingly make it the basis of my future fortune." This feeling never waned. Above a score of years later, Barry writes: "I hear you are displeased with me, which I beg leave to assure you, I shall feel much more than all the distresses and disappointments that have happened to me."

Previous to the earlier date Lord Chesterfield had said of Barry, "He is so handsome, he will not be long on the stage; some rich widow will carry him off." At the later date, Barry was in London, with the widow, but not a rich widow, he had brought from Dublin. The only good result of his otherwise

unlucky sojourn there as theatrical manager, was in his second marriage, with Mrs. Dancer. The lady was admirably trained by him; and when Garrick saw Mrs. Barry play the Irish Widow, in his own farce, after superbly enacting a tragic part, he could not help exclaiming, sincerely as he admired Mrs. Cibber, Pritchard, and Yates—"She is the heroine of heroines!"

In his later days, when infirmity pressed him painfully, Barry occasionally lost his temper for a moment. Once this occurred when Miss Pope's benefit interfered with that of Mrs. Barry, and he wrote an angry letter to Garrick, the ill-temper in which is indicated by Garrick's indorsement: "—from Barry; he calls Miss Pope '*trumpery!*'"

Lacy told Davies that the Barrys' salary was £1500 a year (but the cost of their dresses fell heavily on them). "Mr. Barry is only paid when he plays," said Garrick to Miss Pope; and this explains Barry's own remark, "I have lost £48 by the death of the Princess Louisa."

In costume and in stage diet, Barry was the reverse of Mossop. Near ninety years ago, the former played Othello in a gold-laced scarlet suit, small cocked hat, and knee-breeches, with silk stockings, which then displayed his gouty legs. His wife, as Desdemona, wore, more correctly, a fascinating Italian costume, and looked as captivating as the decaying actor looked grotesque. Barry did not vary his diet according to the part he had to play. It was his invariable custom, after acting, to sup on boiled

fowl. His house, first in Broad Street, then in Norfolk, and lastly in Cecil Street, was visited by the good among the great. Such was Henry Pelham, himself an inelegant but frank speaker in Parliament, who had a great admiration for Barry's graceful elocution. The actor was in possession of all his powers, and his voice was at its sweetest, when he had this honest statesman for friend. Henry Pelham died in 1754, when Barry and Miss Nossiter were playing Romeo and Juliet, with the relish of real lovers. Long before that, however, player and minister had been friends, but it was the player, the Mark Antony of the stage, whose vain-glory made wreck of their friendship. Pelham invited himself to sup with Barry, and the actor treated his guest as one prince might another. He invariably did the honours of his table with great elegance; but on this occasion there was a magnificent ostentation which offended Pelham. "I could not have given a more splendid supper myself," he remarked; and he would never consent to be Barry's guest again.

Of the nineteen characters, of which he was the original actor, there stands out, more celebrated than the rest, Mahomet, in Johnson's "Irene;" Young Norval, in London (in the white puckered satin suit); and Evander, in the "Grecian Daughter." The last was a masterpiece of impersonation, and Barry drew tears as copiously in this part as ever his great rival did in King Lear, in which, by the way, Garrick's too frequent use of his white pocket-handkerchief was looked upon by the critics as bathos,

with respect to the act; and an anachronism, with regard to the article!

"Were interred, in a private manner, in the cloysters, Westminster, the remains of Spranger Barry, late of Covent Garden Theatre." Such is the simple farewell, a week after his death, of the public papers, to young Douglas, old Evander, the silver-toned actor. Macklin was one of the funeral procession from Cecil Street to the cloisters. Looking into the grave, he murmured, "Poor Spranger!" and when some one would fain have led the old man away, he said mournfully, "Sir, I am at my rehearsal. Do not disturb my reverie!"[1]

Mrs. Barry survived her great husband nearly a quarter of a century. Although that great husband did not found a school of acting, he had his imitators. A Barry school required a manly beauty, and an exquisitely-toned voice, such as fall to the lot of few actors. Nevertheless, in 1788, a successor was announced in the person of an Irish player, Middleton, whose real name was Magann. He had abandoned the medical profession for the stage, some obstacles to his reaching which had actually rendered him partially and temporarily insane. He had fine powers of elocution, and in Romeo and Othello reminded the old friends of Barry—perhaps painfully—of their lost favourite. The imitation was, no doubt, strong; but it was stronger off the stage than

[1] It is perhaps scarcely worth noting, but the form of this speech seems to me so much better as given by Cooke, that I venture to quote it:—"Pray, sir, don't disturb me; consider, I am now at *my rehearsal*."

on ; for, with 30s. a week, Middleton strove to live in Barry's sumptuous style. Thereby, he soon ceased to live at all, ending a brief career in abject misery, and leaving his body to be buried by the charity of his fellow-players.

Mrs. Barry was sufficiently recovered from the grief of losing her husband, to be able to play Viola, for her benefit, two months after his decease. When she resumed her great part of Lady Randolph, she spoke a few lines, written by Garrick, in memory of the first and the most elegant and perfect of young Norvals. In those lines Barry is thus alluded to :—

"Of the lov'd pilot of my life bereft,
Save your protection, not a hope is left.
Without that peace your kindness can impart,
Nothing can calm this sorrow-beaten heart.
Urged by my duty, I have ventur'd here ;
But how for Douglas can I shed the tear ?
When real griefs the burden'd bosom press,
Can it raise sighs feign'd sorrows to express ?
In vain will art, from nature, help implore,
When nature for herself exhausts her store.
The tree cut down on which she clung and grew,
Behold, the propless woodbine bends to you ;
Your soft'ning pow'r will spread protection round ;
And, though she droops, may raise her from the ground."

I will not divide the sketch of the story of Mrs. Spranger Barry from that of the greatest and most worthy of her three husbands. Her father was a gay, well-to-do, but extravagant apothecary in Bath, whose daughter, Miss Street, was one of the belles there, celebrated for her graceful figure, expressive beauty, and rich auburn hair. The handsome and clever girl was jilted by a lover, whose affection for the

apothecary's daughter cooled, on a sudden accession of fortune occurring to himself. Poor Ariadne went for solace to the North, where, after some while, she found a Bacchus in a hot-headed, jealous, but seductive actor, named Dancer, who married her, and placed her, nothing loath, upon the stage.

Her friends were scandalised, and her widowed mother bequeathed her a trifling annuity, only on condition of her ceasing to be an actress. Mrs. Dancer declined; and the honest man to whom the annuity was thereby forfeited, surrendered the whole to her, and bade her prosper!

Prosperity, however, only came after long study and severe labour, and many trials and vexations. When Barry assumed the management of the Dublin Theatre, he found Mrs. Dancer a most promising actress, and her lord the most jealous husband in Ireland. Youth, beauty, genius, were the endowments she had brought to that husband; and he, on his death, left her in full possession of all she had brought with her, and nothing more. But these and a liberal salary were charms that attracted many admirers. An Irish earl was not ashamed, indeed, to woo the young, fair, and accomplished creature, with too free a gallantry; but all the earls in the peerage had no chance against the manly beauty and the silver tone of Spranger Barry.

Hand-in-hand with her new husband, she came to London. Garrick sat in the pit, at Foote's theatre, to witness her *début*. He approved; and forthwith she took a place at the head of her profession,—

equal almost with her great namesake of the previous century, not inferior to Mrs. Pritchard or Mrs. Cibber, superior to Mrs. Yates, and not to be excelled till, in the evening of her days, Sarah Siddons came, to wish her gone, and to speed the going.

Mrs. Barry was otherwise remarkable, she had "a modest gaiety in her manners and address;" and though in Belvidera, Lady Randolph, Rutland, Euphrasia, Monimia, and Desdemona, she defied rivalry, she really preferred to act Lady Townley, Beatrice, the Widow Brady, Rosalind, and Biddy Tipkin. She acted tragedy, to gratify the house; comedy, to please herself; and she had a supreme indifference for the patronage of Ladies of Quality if she could only win the plaudits of the public at large. In the "Jubilee," however, she represented the *Tragic* muse.

Two years after Barry's death, his widow met with and married a scampish young Irish barrister, named Crawford, who spent her money, broke her heart, and was the cause of her theatrical wardrobe being seized by a Welsh landlord, for debt. The General who married the widow of Napoleon treated her with respect, but young Crawford only regarded the middle-aged but handsome and accomplished widow of Spranger Barry as a means whereby he might live. There is something supremely melancholy in the story of Mrs. Barry, after this time. She raised her young husband to such efficiency that in London, he played Pierre, to her Belvidera; and the bad fellow might have respected a woman who did this, and could also earn £1100 in sixteen nights of acting,

in Ireland. In the latter country, whither Mrs. Crawford, as I regret to call her, went, after playing Zara, in 1781, thereby leaving a long-desired opening to Mrs. Siddons,—Mr. Crawford acquired a reputation for shabbiness. On his benefit night, in a supper scene, he provided no refreshments on the table, for the actors seated round it, and this omission produced a scene of unrehearsed effects,—of exposure of Crawford's meanness, on the part of the players, and indignation against him on the part of the audience. When he became lessee, after Ryder, his own unhappy wife could not trust him, and often refused to go on, till Crawford had collected the amount of her salary from the doorkeepers,—if they had taken as much. He was reduced to such straits that one night, on the desertion of his unpaid band, he himself, and alone, played the violin in the orchestra, dressed as he was for Othello, which he acted on the stage. The Irish audience enjoyed the fun, and even Mrs. Crawford was so attached to him, that when Jephson's "Count of Narbonne" was first produced, in which, from her age, she should have played the Countess, she chose to act Adelaide, that her husband might still make love to her, as Theodore!

All that she earned, Crawford squandered. Fortunately, the small annuity left by her mother was secured to her, and this Crawford could not touch. What became of this unworthy Irishman I cannot say; but he helped to spoil Mrs. Crawford, as an actress. Her health and spirits failed, and her acting grew comparatively languid. The appearance of

Mrs. Siddons, in the best of her years, strength, beauty, and ability, quickened the jealous pulses of the older actress's heart, and she once more played Lady Randolph, with such effect, that the *Morning Chronicle* asserted, no competitor could achieve a like triumph. The younger actress at last outshone Mrs. Crawford, whose very benefits became unprofitable. Her last appearance on the stage was at Covent Garden, on the 16th of April 1798, in Lady Randolph, a character which Mrs. Siddons did not play that season,—her Mrs. Haller being the peculiar triumph of that glorious year.

Mrs. Barry, the original Euphrasia, died in 1801, having reaped honour enough to enable her to be free from envy of others, and having means sufficient to render her closing days void of anxiety. The Grecian Daughter, the Widow Brady, and Edwina, in Hannah More's "Percy," were the best of her original characters; of her other characters, Lady Randolph is the most intimately connected with her name. As between her and Mrs. Siddons, the judgment seems well-founded which declares that Mrs. Crawford was inferior to Mrs. Siddons in the terrific, but superior in the pathetic. At Mrs. Crawford's "Is he alive?" in Lady Randolph, Bannister had seen half the pit start to their feet. Mrs. Siddons was but a "demi-goddess," as Walpole has it, in comedy, where Mrs. Barry was often inimitable. Walpole saw both actresses in "Percy," and he most admired Mrs. Siddon's passionate scenes. When, years before, he saw Mrs. Barry in the same play, his mind was pre-occupied with politics, and he

thought less of the actress than of passing events, of which he was reminded by passages in the play.

Mrs. Crawford, to take leave of her in her last name, was no admirer of the great actress by whom she was displaced; and albeit somewhat smartly, the old lady did not ill distinguish between the school to which she belonged and that founded by her comparatively young rival. "The Garrick school," she said, "was all *rapidity* and *passion;* while the Kemble school is so full of *paw* and *pause* that, at first, the performers, thinking their new competitors had either lost their cues, or forgotten their parts, used frequently to prompt them."

As we associate the name of Barry with that of Garrick, so do we that of Mossop with Spranger Barry. Mossop, whose career on the stage commenced in 1749, with Zanga,—type of characters in which alone he excelled,—died in 1773, at the age of forty-five. He was the ill-fated son of an Irish clergyman, and he was always on the point of becoming a great actor, but never accomplishing that end. His syllables fell from him like minute-guns, even in or-din-a-ry con-ver-sa-tion, and the nickname of the "tea-pot actor," referred to his favourite attitude with one arm on his hip and the other extended. In London, an evanescent success in Richard and similar characters, almost made of him a rival of Garrick. In Dublin, he ruined Barry by his opposing management, which also brought down ruin on himself. Of this "monster of perfection," or the "pragmatical puppy," as he was variously called, we learn some-

thing from the *Dublin Journal* of May 8th, 1772, which says, "A few days ago, the celebrated tragedian, Mossop, moved to his new apartments in the Rules of the Fleet." When Mossop repaired to London his powers had failed. He could not obtain "first business," declined to accept "second," and proudly died in poverty, at Chelsea, leaving for all fortune one poor penny.[1]

Garrick offered to bury him, but a kinsman who would have nothing to say to the actor, claimed the satisfaction of consigning him to the grave, whither, after all, his brother actors carried him. So ended the promising player who combined gastronomy with his study of the drama, and ordered his dinner according to the part he had to act; sausages and Zanga; rump-steaks and Richard; pork-chops and Pierre; veal-cutlets and Barbarossa; and so forth! The antagonism of the two Irish actors seems to have wearied the Dublin people, who, at last,

> "Did not care a toss-up,
> If Mossop beat Barry, or Barry beat Mossop."

Of some other actors who left the stage about the same period I will speak in the next chapter.

[1] I cannot help remarking that Dr. Doran does not give Mossop anything like his proper importance. He was one of the three great actors of his period: Garrick, Barry, Mossop. I may also say that the date of his death is uncertain. It may have been 1775.

KITTY CLIVE'S HOUSE, TWICKENHAM.

CHAPTER XXI.

KITTY CLIVE, WOODWARD, AND SHUTER.

As Mr. Wilks passes along, to or from rehearsal, there are two young girls of about sixteen years of age who gaze at him admiringly. Day after day the graceful actor remarks this more graceful couple, the name of the brighter of whom is Raftor. If not Irish, she is of Irish parentage, and of good family. Her father, a native of Kilkenny, had served King James, and got ruin for his wages. When Catherine Raftor was born, in 1711, she was born into a poor household, and received as poor an education as many countesses, her contemporaries; and here we come

upon her, some sixteen years afterwards, watching *Sir Harry Wildair* entering or issuing from that gate of Elysium, the stage-door of the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane. If she knew but the "Sesame!" that would give admission to *her* she would be as happy as a houri!

She had the potent magic in her voice which won access for her to the elder Cibber, who awarded the young thing fifteen shillings a week,[1] and then intrusted to her the little part of Ismenes in "Mithridates." In such solemn guise commenced the career of the very queen of hoydens and chambermaids. As for her companion in the occupation of gazing at Wilks, in the street,—a Miss Johnson, she was appropriated to himself by Theophilus Cibber, who made of her his first wife; but she failed to attain the celebrity of Miss Raftor, who charmed audiences by the magic of her voice, and authors by the earnestness with which she strove to realise their ideas. She had achieved a great reputation as a comic actress, when, in 1732,[2] Miss Raftor married Mr. Clive, the brother of Mr. Baron Clive. In the following year[3] Fielding thus writes a paragraph of

[1] There are one or two trifling inaccuracies in this, and the preceding paragraph, which are scarcely deserving of separate notes; but which I cannot altogether pass by. Chetwood, from whom all this information is taken, says that Miss Raftor was only twelve when she used to watch Wilks. He also states that her mother had a handsome fortune, so that her household was probably not poor. Her first salary he gives as twenty shillings.

[2] This is the date always given for Mrs. Clive's marriage, but it is curious that her name appeared in the bills as Miss Raftor up to 3d October 1733. On the 5th of the same month it is Mrs. Clive.

[3] 1734.

her biography, in his manly dedication to her of the "Intriguing Chambermaid," in which she played Lettice: "As great a favourite as you are at present with the audience, you would be much more so were they acquainted with your private character, could they see you laying out great part of the profits which arise to you from entertaining them so well, in the support of an aged father; did they see you, who can charm them on the stage with personating the foolish and vicious characters of your sex, acting in real life the part of the best wife, the best daughter, the best sister, and the best friend."

"Kitty Clive," however, and her not very courteous husband, could not keep household together, and they separated. The lady was a little vivacious, and stood undauntedly persistent for her rights, whether at home or on the stage — against her husband, or against Mrs. Cibber, or Edward Shuter, or Garrick himself, who stood in more awe of her than she of him. She alone dared take a liberty with him, and, by a witty word well applied, to so incline him to irrepressible laughter as to render speaking impossible. None other dared so interfere with Roscius. But it was all done out of good nature, in which Mrs. Clive was steeped to the lips, and of which she was lavish even to young actresses who came, in her later days, to dispute the succession to her parts. To the most formidable and triumphant of these, good Miss Pope, she gave excellent counsel, warning, and encouragement, for which "Pope" never ceased to be grateful.

Mrs. Cibber and Mrs. Clive, as Polly and Lucy, in the "Beggar's Opera," must have exhibited a matchless combination of singing and acting. Mrs. Clive was as ambitious as Mrs. Cibber, and would fain have played, like her, leading parts with Garrick. Her most successful attempt in this way was her Bizarre to his Duretete, in the "Inconstant." One effect of her careful, earnest, but perfectly natural and apparently spontaneous acting was to put every other player on his mettle. That done, Mrs. Clive took care the victory should not be lost to her for want of pains to gaily secure it. She was a capital mimic, particularly of the Italian signoras, whom she did not call by nice names. For a town languishing for the return of Cuzzoni, she had the most unqualified contempt. She herself was inimitable; she wrung from Johnson the rarest and most unqualified praise; and over her audiences she ruled supremely; they felt with her, smiled with her, sneered with her, giggled, tossed their heads, and laughed aloud with her. She was the one true Comic Genius, and none could withstand her.

She had that power of identification which belongs only to the great intellectual players. She was a born buxom, roguish chambermaid, fierce virago, chuckling hoyden, brazen romp, stolid country girl, affected fine lady, and thoroughly natural old woman of whatever condition in life. From Phillida, in "Love in a Riddle," her first original character, to Mrs. Winnifred, in the "School for Rakes," her last, with forty years of toil and pleasure between them, she identified

herself with all. *But*, in parts like Portia and Zara, which Mrs. Clive essayed, she fell below their requirements, though I do not know how the most beautifully expressive voice in the world could have been "awkwardly dissonant" in the latter part. Her Portia was too flippant, and in the trial scene it was her custom to mimic the most celebrated lawyer of the day. The laughter raised thereby was uncontrollable, but it was as illegitimately awakened as Dogget's when he played Shylock as a low comedy part.

After forty years' service Mrs. Clive took leave of the stage, April 24, 1769, in Flora, in the "Wonder," and the Fine Lady in "Lethe." Garrick played Don Felix; King, Lissardo; and Mrs. Barry, Violante; a grand cast in which, we are told, Mrs. Clive made Flora, in the estimation of the audience, equal to Felix and Violante. Drury Lane, had it been capacious enough, would have held twice the number that gained admittance. From these she took leave, in an epilogue, weak and in bad taste, written by her friend Walpole, who affected to despise the writers of such addresses, and, in this case, did not equal those whom he despised.

Mrs. Clive has the reputation of being the authoress of two or three insignificant farces, produced at her benefits, to exhibit some peculiar talent of her own. They had no other merit. Such was her theatrical, let us now accompany her to her private, career. The last editor of Walpole's Letters states, that to a youth of folly succeeded an old age of cards. This state-

ment is mostly gratuitous. Isaac Reed says: "Notwithstanding the temptations to which a theatre is sometimes apt to expose young persons of the female sex, and the too great readiness of the public to give way to unkind suppositions in regard to them, calumny itself has never seemed to aim the slightest arrow at her fame."

She was quick of temper, especially if David attempted to fine her for absence from rehearsals; and no wonder, since for one hundred and eighty nights' performance this charming actress received but £300! but, as she said, "I have always had good health, and have ever been above subterfuge." When about to retire she wrote to Garrick, with some obliviousness as to dates:—"What signifies 52? They had rather see *the* Garrick and *the* Clive at 104 than any of the moderns. The ancients, you know, have always been admired. I do assure you I am at present in such health and spirits that, when I recollect I am an old woman, I am astonished."

In her retirement Mrs. Clive passed many happy years in the house which Walpole gave up as a home for herself and brother, next to his own at Strawberry, and which he playfully called "Clive-den." A green lane, which he cut for her use between the house and the common, he proposed to call *Drury Lane*. Here, at Cliveden, the ex-actress gave exquisite little suppers after pleasant little card parties, at which, in Walpole's phrase, she made miraculous draughts of fishes. Men and women of "quality" and good character, married and unmarried—actors, authors,

artists, and clergymen—met here; where the brother of the hostess, a poor ex-actor, ill-favoured and awkward, told capital stories, and found the company in laughter and Walpole in flattery.

Of an evening, in summer-time, trim Horace and portly Clive might be seen walking in the meadows together; or Walpole and a brilliant company, gossiping, laughing, flirting, philandering, might be noted on their way across the grass to Strawberry, after a gay time of it at "*Little* Strawberry Hill." Not always without mishap, as Walpole himself has recorded in his narrative of his perilous passing of the stile with Miss Rich; and not invariably in the very sunniest of humours, for Miss Pope had seen Horace "gloomy of temper and dryly sarcastic of speech." The place was, perhaps, at its pleasantest, when Walpole, Mrs. Clive, and her brother, sat together in the garden, and conversed playfully of old dramatic glories. *She* was so joyous, that Lady Townshend said—her face rose on Strawberry and made it sultry. And Walpole himself remarked, in 1766, "Strawberry is in perfection; the verdure has all the bloom of spring; the orange trees are loaded with blossoms; the gallery is all sun and gold; and Mrs. Clive all sun and vermillion." When Hounslow powder mills blew up, Walpole described the terrific power of the explosion, by remarking, that it "almost shook Mrs. Clive!" Only the death of the last Earl of Radnor, of the Robartes line, made her *almost* look sad. The earl left her £50 as a memorial of his respect; and what with the heat of the summer of 1757, the unexpected

legacy, and her assumption of respectful grief, she made up one of the drollest faces imaginable. One of her dear delights was to play quadrille with George Montagu, from dinner to supper, and then to sing Purcell, from supper to breakfast time. She left the place, even for short intervals, with reluctance; but her brilliant face was seen for a whole day in Palace Yard, where she sat to see the coronation procession of George III., with her *great* friends around her—Lady Hertford, Lady Anne Conway, Lady Hervey, Lady Townshend, Miss Hotham, Mr. Chute, and also her brother. Her only trials were when the tax-gatherer ran off, and she was compelled to pay her rates twice; or when the parish refused to mend her ways, as she said; or her house was broken into by burglars; or when she was robbed in her own lane by footpads. "Have you not heard," she wrote to Garrick, in June 1776, "of your poor Pivy? I have been rob'd and murder'd coming from Kingston. Jimey" (her brother) "and I in a post chey, at half-past nine, just by Teddington church, was stopt. I only lost a little silver and my senses; for one of them came into the carriage with a great horse pistol, to search for my watch, but I had it not with me." And then Garrick and other actors, with Governor Johnstone and his wife, met at Little Strawberry at dinner, and laughed over past perils.

In 1784 she came up to London to see Mrs. Siddons act. Mrs. Clive was born in the lifetime of Elizabeth Barry, who had acted before Charles II.; she had seen Mrs. Porter, Mrs. Oldfield, Mrs. Cibber,

Mrs. Pritchard, Mrs. Yates, and Anne Barry; and finally, she saw Mrs. Siddons. Mrs. Clive listened to the new actress with profound attention; and on being asked, at the conclusion of the performance, what she thought of it: "Think!" said the vivacious old lady, in her ready way; "I think it's all truth and daylight!"

In the December of the following year, the long career of this erst comic muse came to a close. Walpole tells it briefly, unaffectedly and well. "It did not much surprise me," he says; "and the manner comforts me. I had played at cards with her, at Mrs. Gostling's, three nights before I came to town, and found her extremely confused, and not knowing what she did; indeed I had seen something of this sort before, and had found her much broken this autumn. It seems, that the day after I saw her, she went to General Lister's burial, and had got cold, and had been ill for two or three days. On the Wednesday morning she rose to have her bed made; and while sitting on the bed, with her maid by her, sank down at once, and died without a pang or a groan." So departed the actress, of whom Johnson said, that she had more true humour than any other he had ever seen. She originated nearly fourscore characters; among others, Nell, in the latter "Devil to Pay;" Lappet ("Miser"); Edging[1] ("Careless Husband"); half a dozen Kittys; but chief of all, the Kitty of "High Life Below Stairs;" Muslin

[1] Mrs. Clive was not the original representative of this character. The comedy was produced in 1704, when Mrs. Lucas played Edging.

("Way to Keep Him"); and Mrs. Heidelberg, in the "Clandestine Marriage."

HARRY WOODWARD: to think of him, is to think of Captain Bobadil,—in which he never had equal,—and of Harlequin, in which he was second only to Rich. To remember Harry Woodward, is to remember the original French Cook, in Dodsley's "Sir John Cockle," wherein Woodward turned to good account the French he had learned at Merchant Tailors' school. He was also the first Beau in "Lethe;" and his Flash in "Miss in her Teens," his Jack Meggot in the "Suspicious Husband," his Dick in the "Apprentice," his Block in the "Reprisal," his Lofty in the "Good Natured Man," his Captain Ironsides in the "Brothers," and his Captain Absolute in the "Rivals," were all original and brilliant creations, in acting which, the best of his many brightly-endowed successors lacked something possessed by *him*, whose Slender and Petruchio are described as being perfect pictures of simplicity and manliness.

Look at him, in his boyhood;—he is a tallow chandler's son, *rien que ça!* living close by the Anchor brewery, in Southwark;—Mr. Child's brewery, whose daughter married with his clerk, Halsey; and then it was Halsey's brewery; and Halsey's only daughter married Lord Cobham; and from this pair, the brewery was bought by Halsey's manager and nephew, Ralph Thrale, on the death of whose son, Henry, it passed by purchase to his chief clerks, Barclay and Perkins. The brewery,

now, is no more like what it was in Woodward's days than Drury Lane theatre is like the Curtain, the Fortune, or the Globe. As Woodward played beneath the Anchor gateway, there was probably little uneasiness in his mind at the idea of his helping and succeeding his sire in candle making; but when Woodward became a pupil at Merchant Tailors', I think it may have been otherwise. How young Woodward was ever sent thither, I cannot guess; but I conclude that his father, "the *tallow* chandler," was not aware, that among the statutes of the institution there was one which said that, "in the schoole at noe time of the yere, they shall use tallow candle in noe wise, but wax candles onely." Perhaps old Woodward supplied them to order.

I think if Woodward had never gone to Merchant Tailors', he never would have added lustre to the British stage. He was born about the last year of Queen Anne's reign,[1] and was in Lawrence Pountney when he was some ten years old. The quick lad became a very good classical scholar, and in after years, he used to astonish and gratify the society which he most loved, by the aptness and beauty of his quotations; not for effect, for Harry Woodward, look you, was as modest as he was clever.

Well, learning to enjoy Horace, you will say, was no specific for turning a boy into a player. Perhaps not; but there was less satisfactory customs then prevailing among the *Mercatores Scissores*. The masters treated the boys who missed their election to St. John's, with

[1] 1717 is generally given as the year of his birth.

canary and cake, as if to teach them that drinking was a solace for disappointment. Then the discipline was lax, and young Merchant Tailors of the Bench were seduced by the rather older Merchant Tailors of the Table, to taverns, and to ordinaries, where gaming was practised, and to the playhouse, where they learned something new from the Vizard Masks in the pit. Then, there was young Beckingham, the linen-draper's son, and a Merchant Tailor of the Table, who wrote a tragedy, "Scipio Africanus," to see which the whole school occupied a great portion of the Lincoln's Inn Fields' pit, and sent up applauding shouts for Quin, who acted Scipio, as well as for their schoolfellow, the author. These practices and the traditions of others may have influenced a lively and thoughtless boy, who was proud to play Peachum in the juvenile company, who acted the "Beggar's Opera," under the elder Rich, at Lincoln's Inn Fields. I cannot find exactly the date when Woodward commenced as a professional actor; but he was not more than a mere youth. There was a boy of his name, at Goodman's Fields, who played pantomime parts before Harry Woodward appeared there in 1730,—commencing then a career with Simple, in the "Merry Wives of Windsor," which ended at Covent Garden, on the 13th of January 1777, with Stephano, in the "Tempest." On the 10th of April, the then new comedy, "Know your own Mind," was acted, for his benefit, and on that day week, the lad who used to play under the gateway of the Anchor brewery,—to trudge, in all weathers, over old London Bridge, to

Merchant Tailors' School, and who preferred the life of a player to that of a candle-maker, died; and with him, it was said, as Wildair with Wilks, Captain Bobadil died too.

Woodward was one of the most careful dressers on the stage; not as regards chronology, but perfection of suit; of fitness, no one then made account. Woodward played Mercutio in the full dress of a very fine gentleman of Woodward's day; it was unexceptionable as costume, though not fitting in the play. Then, he was one of the few lucky actors who never seemed to grow old. After nigh upon half a century of labour, his Fitzpatrick,[1] in "News from Parnassus," was as young in look and buoyant in manner as the Spruce of his earlier days. He was also among one of the few judicious and generous actors, when in the highest favour with the town; at which season, he did not disdain, when it was needful, to go on as a soldier, to deliver a message; but then he delivered it like a soldier, and the frequenters of the joyous rooms under and over the "Piazza," made approving reference to that "clever little bit of Woodward's, last night."

Woodward always found a defender in Garrick. Foote, who abused hospitality by mimicking his host, called Woodward a "contemptible fellow," when he heard that the latter was about to dress Malagene so as to look like Foote. "He cannot be contemptible," said Garrick, "since you are afraid of him in the very line in which you yourself excel."

[1] Should be Fitzfrolick.

Of course, being naturally a comic actor, Woodward had an affection for tragedy; but it was not in him to utter a serious line with due effect. His scamps were perfect in their cool impudence; his modern fops shone with a brazen impertinence; his fops of an older time glistened with an elegant rascality; his mock heroes were stupendously but suspiciously outrageous; his every-day simpletons, vulgarly stolid; and his Shaksperian light characters brimful and running over with Shaksperian spirit. Graceful of form, his aspect was something serious off the stage, but he no sooner passed the wing than a ripple of funny emotion seemed to roll over his face, and this, combined with a fine stage-voice, never failed to place him and his audience in the happiest sympathetic connection. "Bobadil was his great part, in which he acquired a vast increase of reputation and gave a striking proof of his genius;" but there were two other characters in which Woodward could hardly have been inferior, for it may be gathered from Wilkinson, that in Marplot, he was everything author or audience could wish, and that in Touchstone, he excelled at least all his contemporaries, and had no equal in it till Lewis came.

Woodward was at one time a *good man*, in the mercantile view of the phrase, for he was a rich man. Unfortunately, he was induced by Spranger Barry to become partner with him in the Dublin Theatre,—in which venture, Woodward lost all he had saved; and Barry, too, made shipwreck of his fortune. Garrick passed from the stage to years of repose and enjoy-

ment. Barry and Woodward could not quit it till, having had more than enough of labour, Death summoned them to a, perhaps, not unwelcome rest.

Little is known of the origin of Edward Shuter. Small trust can be placed in the report that he was the son of a clergyman—not because he himself was, at one time, only a billiard-marker, or that he could with difficulty read his parts, and had much perplexity in even signing his own name; but because Ned himself never boasted of it. What is certain of him is, that he was an actor entirely of the Garrick period, commencing his vocation as Catesby, at Richmond, in 1744, and concluding as Falstaff, to the Prince, in "Henry V.,"[1] of Lewis, played for his own benefit, at Covent Garden, in May 1776.

I suppose Chapman, who directed the theatre at Richmond, was struck by the rich humour of the billiard-marker; but it was strange that a low comedian should make his *début* in so level a part as Catesby. He was then, however, a mere boy. In June 1746, when he acted Osrick and third Witch in "Macbeth," Garrick playing Hamlet and the Thane, he was designated "Master Shuter." Thence, to the night on which he went home to die, after playing Falstaff, his life was one of intense professional labour, with much jollification, thoughtlessness, embarrassment gay philosophy, hard drinking, and addiction to religion, as it was expounded by Whitfield.

He played through the entire range of a wide comic repertory, and among the characters which he

[1] Should be "Henry IV.—part 1st."

originated are Papillion in the "Liar," Justice Woodcock, Druggett, Abrahamides, Croaker, Old Hardcastle, and Sir Anthony Absolute. His most daring effort was in once attempting *Shylock!* There are few comic actors who have had such command over the muscles of the face as Shuter. He could do what he liked with them, and vary the laughter as he worked the muscles. Not that he depended on grimace; this was only the ally of his humour, and both were impulsive—as the man was by nature; he often stirred the house with mirth by saying something better than the author had put down for him. Off, as on the stage, it was Shuter's characteristic that he pleased everybody—and ruined himself. I never pass his old lodgings in Denzil Street without thinking kindly of the eccentric but kind-hearted player. Some laughed at him, perhaps, for taking to serious ways, without abandoning his old gay paths of delight; but the former was of his sincerity, the latter of his weakness. That he should choose to follow Calvinistic Whitfield rather than Arminian Wesley, does seem singular; but poor Ned felt that if salvation depended on works, "Pilgarlick," as Whitfield called him, was lost; whereas faith rescued him, and Shuter could believe. He did something more; works he added to his faith, though he made no account of them. Of all the frequenters of Whitfield's Tabernacle in Tottenham Court Road there was no more liberal giver than the shattered, trembling, laughing, hoping, fearing, despairing—in short, much perplexed actor and man

who oscillated between Covent Garden stage and the Tabernacle pulpit, and meditated over his pipe and bottle in Drury Lane upon the infinite varieties of life. And therewith *exit*, Shuter; and enter, Mr. Foote.

Mr. Shuter as Justice Woodcock.

MR. FOOTE AS MRS. COLE IN "THE MINOR"

CHAPTER XXII.

SAMUEL FOOTE.

"One Foote, a player," is Walpole's contemptuous reference to him who was otherwise designated as the "British Aristophanes." But, as often happens, the player was as good a man by birth, and at least as witty a man by nature, as he who despised him. His father was a Cornish gentleman, and an M.P.; his mother a daughter of Sir Edmund Goodere, Bart., through whom Foote called cousins with the ducal family of Rutland. A lineal successor of this baronet followed Mrs. Clive, as Walpole's tenant at Little Strawberry Hill, and Horace called him "a goose."

Young Sam Foote, born at Truro, in 1720, became a pupil at the Worcester Grammar School. His kinsfolk on the maternal side used to invite him to dinner on the Sundays, and the observant, but not too grateful guest, kept the Monday school hilarious and idle, by imitations of his hospitable relatives. The applause he received, helped to make Foote, ultimately, both famous and infamous.

Later in life, he entered Worcester College, Oxford, and quitted both with the honours likely to be reaped by so clever a student. Having made fun of the authorities, made a fool of the provost, and made the city turn up the eye of astonishment at his audacity in dress, and way of living, he "retired," an undergraduate, to his father's house. There, by successfully mimicking a couple of justices, who were his father's guests, he was considered likely to have an especial call to the Bar. He entered at the Temple, and while resident there, a catastrophe occurred in his family. His mother had two brothers; Sir John Goodere and Captain Samuel Goodere. The baronet was a bachelor, and the captain in the royal navy, being anxious to enjoy the estate, strangled his elder brother on board his own ship, the *Ruby*. The assassin was executed. Shortly after, Cooke introduced his finely-dressed friend Foote, at a club in Covent Garden, as "Mr. Foote, the nephew of the gentleman who was lately hung in chains for murdering his brother!"

Foote succeeded as ill at the Temple as at Oxford; and his necessities, we are told, drove him on the

stage. As, when those necessities were relieved, he preferred buying a diamond ring, or new lace for his coat, to purchasing a pair of stockings, we may fairly conclude that the stage was a more likely place wherein he might succeed than the back benches of a court of law. Indeed, he did not live to make, but to break, fortunes. Of these he "got through" three, and realised the motto on his carriage, "*Iterum, iterum, iterumque.*"

His connection with those great amateur actors, the Delavals, was of use to him, for it afforded him practice, and readier access to the stage, where, as a regular player, he first appeared at the Haymarket, on the 6th of February 1744, as Othello, "dressed after the manner of the country." He failed; yet "he perfectly knew what the author meant," says Macklin. Others, again, describe his Moor as a masterpiece of burlesque, only inferior in its extravagance and nonsense to his Hamlet, which I do not think he ever attempted. His Pierre and Shylock were failures, and even his Lord Foppington, played in his first season, indicated that Cibber was not to depart with the hope that he was likely to have in Foote an able successor.

Nevertheless, it is difficult to assign Foote's position exactly. According to Davies, he was despicable in all parts, but those he wrote for himself; and Colman says he was jealous of every other actor, and cared little how any dramas but his own were represented. Wilkinson ascribes to him a peculiar excellence.

In Dublin, 1744–45, he was well received, and drew a few good houses; and thence came to Drury Lane. He played the fine gentlemen,—Foppington, Sir Novelty Fashion, Sir Courtly Nice, Sir Harry Wildair; with Bayes, and Dick; Tinsel, and the Younger Loveless, in Beaumont and Fletcher's "Scornful Lady;" but he could not reach the height of Cibber, Booth, or Wilks. He had the defects of all three, and nothing superior to either, but in the expression of the eye and lip. His thick-set figure, and his vulgar cast of features, he had not yet turned to purpose. He was conscious of a latent strength, but knew not where it lay. He had failed in tragedy, and was pronounced unfit for comedy; and he asked, almost despairingly, "What the deuce then *am* I fit for?" As we find him the next three years, 1747–49, at the Haymarket, giving his "Diversions of the Morning," his "Tea," his "Chocolate," and his "Auction of Pictures," it is clear that he soon discovered where his fitness lay.

At the outset, he combined the regular drama with his "Entertainment," Shuter, Lee, and Mrs. Hallam being with him. The old wooden house being unlicensed, Foote got into difficulties, for a time, but he surmounted them by perseverance. He drew the town, morning after morning, and then night after night, with imitations of the actors at other houses, of public characters, and even of members of private clubs. Some of the actors retaliated, Woodward particularly. Their only strong point was that Foote, in striving to enrich himself, was injuring

the regular drama. His Cat Concerts did really constitute fair satire against the Italians. But people paid, laughed, and defied law and the constables; and Foote continued to show up Dr. Barrowby, the critic; Chevalier Taylor, the quack oculist; Cock, the auctioneer; Orator Henley; Sir Thomas De Veil, the Justice of the Peace; and other noted persons of the day.

How these persons were affected by the showing-up, I cannot say; but Foote objected to being himself shown up by Woodward. Whereon Garrick asked, "Should he dress at you in the play, how can you be alarmed at it, or take it ill? The character, exclusive of some little immoralities which can never be applied to you, is that of a very smart, pleasant, conceited fellow, and a good mimic."

For a few years Foote was engaged alternately at either house, on a sort of starring engagement, during which he produced his "Englishman in Paris" (Buck, by Macklin;[1] Lucinda, by his clever daughter); "Englishman Returned from Paris" (Buck, by Foote); "Taste" (Lady Pentweazle, by Worsdale);[2] and the "Author" (Cadwallader, by Foote). In the first two satires, was scourged the alleged folly of sending a young fellow to travel, by way of education; but in this instance the satire fails, for Buck, who leaves home a decided brute, returns in an improved form as only a coxcomb. "Taste" satirised the enthusiasm

[1] Macklin was the original Buck; but when Foote produced the farce, during his own engagement, he played the part himself.

[2] During the period here referred to, Foote played the part.

for objects of *virtú*, the gross humbug of portrait painters, and the vanity of those who sat to them. Worsdale was himself an artist, and a scamp. He kept, half-starved, and kicked Letitia Pilkington, the very head of all the house of hussies, obnoxious to such treatment. In the "Author," Foote did not so much satirise writers, or care for improving their condition, as he did to caricature one of his own friends, Mr. Ap Rice (or Apreece), a patron of authors, who sat open-mouthed and silly, in the boxes, to the delight of the audience, and mystified by the reflection of himself, which he beheld on the stage.

In 1760, Foote brought out his "Minor" in Dublin, he playing Shift, and Woodward, Mrs. Cole. In the summer of the same year he reproduced it at the Haymarket, playing Shift, Smirk, and Mrs. Cole. After occasionally acting at the two larger theatres, and creating Young Wilding, in the "Liar," he finally went to the Haymarket, where, from 1762 to 1776, he acted almost exclusively.

In the "Minor," the author pilloried Langford, the plausible auctioneer, Mother Douglas, a woman of very evil life, and, in Shift, the Rev. George Whitfield, who was nobly, and with much self-abnegation, endeavouring to amend life wherever he found it of an evil quality. Here was Foote's weakness. He did not care for the suppression of vice; but if he who attempted to suppress it had a foible, or a strongly-marked characteristic, Foote laid hold of him, and made him look like a fool or a rascal, in the eyes of a too willing audience.

The "Minor" failed in Dublin, very much to the credit of an Irish audience, if they condemned it on the ground of its grossness and immorality. To the credit of English society, there was strong protest made against it here; and also in Scotland—in and out of the pulpit; but the theatres were full whenever it was represented, nevertheless! The injury it effected must have been incalculable, for the wit was on a par with the blasphemy; but when Saving Grace and the work of the Holy Ghost are employed to raise a laugh of derision, the edification of the hearers is as little to be expected as it was hoped or cared for by the author. Foote, nevertheless, protested that in this piece, which brought back the coarseness of Aphra Behn, with a deeper irreligious tint, he meant no offence against the pious, but only against hypocrites. He was merely driven to that excuse. It is one, I think, that cannot be accepted, for Foote was not a truthful man. When he was taxed with ridiculing the Duchess of Kingston as Kitty Crocodile, in the "Trip to Calais," he assured Lord Hertford, the Chamberlain, that he had no idea that the allusions in that piece could apply to the duchess; and when he failed in procuring a license to play it, he had the impudence to assert, as the grounds of failure, that he had refused to put Lord Hertford's son on the box-keeper's free list—or as a more improbable story has it, to make the young gentleman box-keeper; and—hence, denial of the license! Lady Llanover, in a note in her *Memoirs of Mrs. Delaney*, roundly asserts that when Foote had completed his caricature

of the duchess, "he informed her of it, in the hopes of extorting a large bribe for its suppression;" but from this assertion I dissent; though it is not improbable, as Walpole has recorded, that the duchess offered him a bribe "just as if he had been a member of parliament!"

Foote's fourteen years' of summer seasons at the Haymarket, formed an era of their own. There had never been anything resembling it, nor has anything like it succeeded. In his first year, 1762, he produced the "Orators." "There is a madness for oratorys," writes Walpole, alluding to Macklin's school, and Foote's lectures. In the satire on public speakers, Foote caricatured Faulkner, the Irish publisher; a fact which Chesterfield was the first to joyfully proclaim to the victim, whose infirmity—he had but one leg—should have saved him from what otherwise may have been due to his conceit, if personal caricature be justifiable at all.

In the "Mayor of Garratt," the more general caricature of a class—the Sneaks and the Bruins, has been more lastingly popular; the individual, however, is included in Matthew Mug, aimed at the Duke of Newcastle.

In the "Patron," the general satire was levelled at the enthusiasm of antiquaries, men capable of falling in love with a lady, because her nose resembled that of the bust of the Empress Poppœa. The individual pilloried in this piece was Lord Melcombe, under the form of Sir Thomas Lofty, played by Foote; who also laughed at the English Nabob of that day,

in Sir Peter Pepperpot, acted by him, in the same piece. Foote considered this his best play; but in this, as in all his pieces, with much original wit, there was rank, though judicious plagiarism, from the stores of other writers.

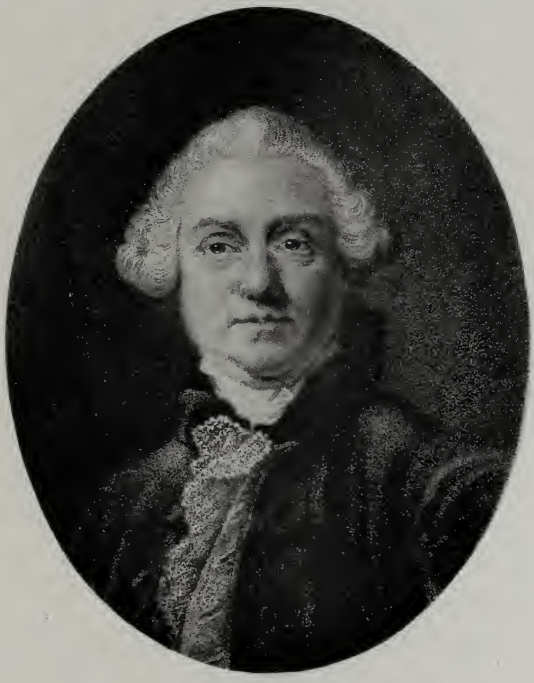
In the "Commissary," Foote, as Zachary Fungus, aimed his shafts at the gentility of the vulgar; hitting Dr. Arne, personally, in the character of Dr. Catgut. In 1766, Foote met with the accident which reduced him to the condition of one-legged George Faulkner, whom he held up to ridicule in the "Orators," and he did not play;[1] but in 1767 he opened the Haymarket Theatre, after reconstructing the interior. He wrote no new piece; but he had the Barrys for a few nights, and brought out that burlesque-tragedy, the "Tailors," which was said to have been left anonymously at Dodsley's shop, and which kept its vitality down to the days of John Reeve. The fault of this piece is not in having tailors instead of persons of consequence in a burlesque, but—that the tailors talk seriously, and like people of consequence, well brought up.

His great success in 1768, was with his "Devil on Two Sticks," by which he cleared between three and four thousand pounds—a golden harvest, of which scarcely a grain was left at the close of the year. The satire here is generally laid against medical quackery, in the person of Dr. Last, by Weston; but Foote, as the Devil in disguise, took upon him

[1] He certainly played during this summer, but probably only for a short period.

the burthen of individual caricature. As Dr. Squib, he rendered ridiculous Dr. Brocklesby; and as the President of a College of Physicians, he exposed to derision Sir William Browne, who had taken an active part in a professional controversy, now without interest. Sir William's wig, coat, contracted eye firmly holding an eye-glass, and his remarkably upright figure, were all there; but the caricaturist had forgotten Sir William's special characteristic — his muff, which the good-tempered doctor sent to Foote, to make the figure complete!

In 1769, Foote produced nothing new of his own; but the general business was good, and Sheridan drew good houses in tragedy, both this season and the next, though Foote described him as "dwindled down into a mere *Cock and Bottle* Chelsea Pensioner." In 1770, Foote, in his "Lame Lover," in which he acted Sir Luke Limp (Vandermere and Weston played Serjeant and Jack Circuit), made a miss in aiming at "those maggots of the law, who breed in the rotten parts of it." In the following year, the groundwork of his expected annual play, was the ungallant conduct of Mr. Walter Long to Miss Linley, afterwards Mrs. R. B. Sheridan. In the "Maid of Bath," Long is severely handled under the name of Flint, and Bath society is roughly illustrated. The taste, in using a private domestic story for such a purpose, is questionable. The satire, however, did not kill Long, who lived till 1807, and bequeathed then, to the already wealthiest heiress in England, Miss Tilney, daughter of Sir James Til-



ney, Bart., nearly a quarter of a million of money. It was this heiress's hard fate to marry a more worthless personage than he who only wooed and was false to the Maid of Bath; and the small wreck of her fortune is now being saved—or lost amid the breakers and breakwaters of the Court of Chancery.

Foote, characterising himself as a "popularity-monger," produced in the course of his next season the "Nabob," in which he made a combined charge on antiquaries and Anglo-East Indians generally, in the person of Sir Matthew Mite, in which was involved the individual caricature of General Richard Smith, whose father had been a cheesemonger. Some irascible Anglo-Indians called at Foote's house in Suffolk Street, behind the theatre, to administer personal chastisement; but he bore himself with such tact, convinced them so conclusively that he had not had Smith in his mind, and persuaded them, by reading the play, that it was only naughty old Indians generally against whom he wrote, that they who came to horsewhip remained to dine, and make a night of it. The piece was afterwards supported by the *good* old ladies, to show their antagonism to Anglo-Indian naughtiness.

Foote's "Nabob" afforded Walpole an excuse for withdrawing his name from the Society of Antiquaries. In the play, Mite is made an F.S.A.; and reads a foolish address to the Society, on Whittington and his Cat. This was in ridicule of Pegge, who had touched on the subject of the illustrious lad, but who was "gravelled" by the then inexplicable *Cat.*

Walpole, affecting to see that Pegge and Foote had rendered the Society for ever ridiculous, took his name off the books; but not on that account. The true ground was that, in his own words:—"I heard that they intended printing some more foolish notes against my Richard III."

In 1773, Foote produced his Puppet-show-droll, "Piety in Pattens, or the Handsome Housemaid." In this he committed a mistake, not unlike that he had committed in the "Minor," by taking unworthy means to a certain end. In a dull and occasionally indecent introductory address, he professed to have chosen puppets for his actors, because the contemporary players were marked by inability. This was said to a densely crowded house, while Garrick and Barry were still at the head of their profession! In the piece itself, played by excellently contrived puppets, Foote intended to ridicule sentimental comedy, by professedly playing one, showing "how a maiden of low degree, by the mere effects of morality and virtue, raised herself to riches and honours." The sentiment here involved is, of course, made fun of; but, in fact, the author failed to render it ridiculous, for the housemaid declines the riches and honours which she might have taken as the rewards of her morality and virtue. There ensued a riot, and some damage, after which Foote resorted to the novel process of resting the approbation of his piece, on a show of hands; but though there was a majority in his favour, the piece was not permanently successful. The author found compensation in his "Bankrupt,"

which was chiefly aimed at a speculating Baronet, but generally at all who were concerned in cheating their creditors. In 1774 a better, but a more cruel piece of wit, was produced by "Foote, the celebrated buffoon," as Walpole had called him the year before. This was the "Cozeners." Mrs. Grieve, the woman who had extorted money, on pledge of procuring government appointments, and who had not only deceived Charles Fox, by pretending to be able to marry him to an heiress, but had lent him money rather than miss his chariot from her door, was fair game, and was well exposed, in Mrs. Fleecem. This was delicate ground, however, for Foote, who was very generally accused of having earned an annuity from Sir Francis Delaval, by bringing about a marriage between Sir Francis and the widow Lady Nassau Powlett, who had been a very intimate friend of Foote's. The cruelty of the satire lay in the character of Mrs. Simony, in which the vices of the once fashionable and lately hanged preacher, Dodd, were transferred to his then living widow.[1] It was an insult to that poor woman, and a brutality against the Rev. Richard Dodd, brother of the criminal, and the estimable Vicar of Camberwell. The ridicule of Lord Chesterfield's advice to his son is in far better taste. But Foote was now beginning to lose spirit, and he produced only one more piece, the "Capuchin," in which he played O'Donovan, in 1776. This piece was merely an alteration of the unlicensed

[1] This is very inaccurate. "The Cozeners" was produced in 1774, and Dodd was not hanged till 1777.

"Trip to Calais," in which Foote had gibbetted the Duchess of Kingston. In the "Capuchin," he more rudely treated her Grace's Chaplain, Jackson, under the name of Viper; but the farce had small merit, and the only thing in connection with it, deserving of record is, that Jackson, while on trial for treason, in the time of the Irish Rebellion, destroyed himself.

Such are the dramatic works of the English satirist, to compare whom with Aristophanes is an injustice to the Athenian, whose works Plato admired; and even St. Chrysostom kept them under his pillow! In the eleven extant comedies, of the fifty-four written by Aristophanes, we find the inequality of the distribution of riches pointed at in "Plutus;" in the "Clouds" the poet is in jest, not in earnest, in denouncing vice; in the "Frogs" we have a humorous review of both Euripides and Æschylus; in the "Knights," a satire against Cleon, which is unequalled for fun and effect. The "Inhabitants of Acharnæ" is a "screaming farce" chiefly in favour of peace-makers. The "Wasps" caricatures the Athenian disposition to go to law. The "Birds" is made a vehicle to convince the audience of the necessity of a change in the government. "Peace," in which the heroine, so-called, never utters a word, was written to bring about the much-desired end of the Peloponnesian war. The "Female Orators" exposes the absurdity of women desiring to be beyond their vocation. The "Feast of Ceres" demonstrates that the women can both say and act to the purpose when called upon; and this is more

seriously shown in "Lysistrata." All these, however, are original, plot and wit are the poet's own (which is far from being the case with Foote); and the chief end seems to be the public good, and not the satirising of particular individuals. Aristophanes, however, goes in this latter direction, even farther than Foote; his abuse of Socrates, a great and good reformer, is not palliated by the wit which accompanies it; a daring wit, which was carried to such excess that the downfall of the old comedy ensued, and Alcibiades forbade that any living person should be thenceforth attacked by name upon the stage.

The descriptions of Aristophanes are true, however coarse they may be. He was a patriot and philosopher as well as a poet, and fearless in attacking every obstruction to the well-being and improvement of society. Foote laughed at individuals, denied the personality, and cared nothing at all as to who might be the better or the worse for his sarcasm. It has been said that the satire of Aristophanes killed Socrates. It really did so no more than that of Foote killed Whitfield. In this one respect the two men *are* alike.

Such exhibition of character as Foote made was described by Johnson, as a *vice;* and he, like Churchill, denied the actor's powers. The former maintained that Foote was never like the person he assumed to be, but only unlike Foote; and that he failed altogether, except with marked characteristics. He was as a painter who can portray a wen; and if a man hopped on one leg, Foote could do that to the life. Foote himself acknowledged that he pur-

sued folly, and not vices, but he never mimicked in others the follies which were the most strongly marked in himself; such as extravagance in dress. He did not aim at improvement of character; his motives in this respect were of the very lowest: "Who the devil!" he said, "will give money to be told Mr. Such-a-one is wiser and better than himself. . . . Demolish a conspicuous character, and sink him below our level . . . *there* we are pleased, there we chuckle and grin, and toss the half-crown on the counter." Now, bad examples which lower our standard of right and wrong do infinite harm. At this sinking of men below our level, the Archbishop of Dublin has glanced, when he says: "For *one* who is corrupted by becoming as bad as a bad example, there are ten that are debased by becoming *content* with being better."

If there was little honesty in Foote's method of dealing with human weaknesses, so was there small courage in the spirit of the satirist. He could annoy Garrick by saying that his puppets would not be so large as life, "not larger in fact than Mr. Garrick," and could mimic him as refusing to engage Punch and his wife,—Mr. and Mrs. Barry,—for he could do so with impunity. But, Barry, six feet high, he never assailed, and he was deterred from bringing Johnson on the stage, by a threat from the latter that he would break every bone in his body.

Johnson, personally, disliked Foote, yet was forced into admiration by Foote's wonderful powers of wit and laughter-compelling humour. Johnson, pro-

bably, was trying to excuse himself when he said that if the grave Betterton had come into the room where Foote was, the latter would have driven him from it by his broad-faced, obstreperous mirth. But Foote's conversational powers and wide knowledge, which charmed Fox, would have charmed Betterton too, and I do not think either could have been like Johnson's imaginary hostler, who, encountering Foote in a stable, thought him a comic fellow, but parted from him without a feeling of respect. Johnson thought less of Foote's conversation than Fox did; he described it as between wit and buffoonery, but admitted that Foote was a "fine fellow in his way," and he hoped somebody would write his life with diligence. Walpole tersely described him as "a Merry Andrew, but no fool." So the black boy thought, who hated the small beer which Foote (who sneered at Garrick for having been a wine merchant) at one time brewed and sold, through a partner. The boy was so delighted with Foote's wit, as he waited on him at dinner, that he declared, in the kitchen, he could drink his bad beer for ever, and would certainly never complain of it again.

Foote had so little moral courage, and was so thin-skinned, that attacks upon him in the newspapers caused him exquisite pain, and he stooped so far to the Duchess of Kingston as to offer to suppress his "Trip to Calais," if she would put a stop to the assaults made on him through the press. The notorious lady, who was tried for bigamy, called him the "descendant of a Merry Andrew," and

Foote informed her that though his good mother had lived to fourscore, she had never been married *but once.* Something, however, is to be said for this well-abused person. She did not marry the Duke of Kingston till the Ecclesiastical Court had broken her marriage with Lord Hervey. The House of Lords reversed the decree of the Ecclesiastical Court, after the lady had married a second time, and it was this reversal of an old judgment which exposed her to the penalties of bigamy. When these facts are remembered, half the jokes against Foote's adversary fall to the ground.

Neither the claims of friendship nor a sense of courtesy could restrain Foote from a brutal jest when opportunity offered to make one. He had no more intimate friend than Charles Holland, who was at Drury Lane, from 1755 to 1769; and whose father was a baker, at Chiswick. Foote attended the funeral there, and on his return to town, he gaily remarked that he "had seen Holland shoved into the family oven!" As for his courtesy, it was on a par with his sense of friendship and fellowship. When down at Stratford, on the occasion of the Shakspeare Jubilee, Garrick's success embittered Foote's naturally bitter spirit. A well-dressed gentleman there, civilly spoke to him on the proceedings. "Has Warwickshire, sir," said Foote, "the advantage of having produced you as well as Shakspeare?" "Sir," replied the gentleman, "I come from Essex." "Ah!" rejoined Foote, remembering that county was famous for calves, "from Essex! Who drove you?"

The better samples of Foote's wit are to be found in his own comic pieces. In his "Lame Lover," how admirable is Mr. Sergeant Circuit's remark when his wife asks for money, and protests she must have it, as her honour is in pawn! "How a century will alter the meaning of words!" cries the Sergeant. "Formerly, chastity was the honour of women, and good faith and integrity the honour of men; but now, a lady who ruins her family by punctually paying her losses at play, and a gentleman who kills his best friend in a ridiculous quarrel, are your only tip-top people of honour! Well, let them go on! It brings grist to our mill; for while both sexes stick firm to their honour, we shall never want business either at Doctors' Commons or the Old Bailey!" Again, in the "Nabob," a hard hit is made at the bold profligacy of the period, in the words of Touchet (Baddeley) to Sir Matthew Mite (Foote), both of whom had been talking of hanging, or worse, hereafter, to the bribe-taking members of an election club;—"That's right, stick to that! for though the Christian Club may have some fears of the gallows, they don't value damnation a farthing!"

Some of Foote's apologists have almost worshipped him as the reformer of abuses, the scourge of hypocrites, and the terror of evil-doers. But Foote does not seem to have been moved by any higher principle than gain. If Mrs. Salmon had a Chamber of Horrors, the more murders that were committed, the better she was pleased, for the more she made by the crime. Foote endeavoured to crush Whitfield by

personal ridicule; but Whitfield was a far more useful man in his very wicked generation than Foote, who did not denounce the wickedness, but mimicked the peculiarities of the reformer. "There is hardly a public man in England," says Davies, "who has not entered Mr. Foote's theatre with an aching heart, under the apprehension of seeing himself laughed at."

Foote certainly read the pieces offered him for presentation. He kept Reed's "Register Office" for months, and thought so well of it as to turn its Mrs. Snarewell into Mrs. Cole, in his "Minor." That was little compared with his stealing a whole farce from Murphy; and the last was nothing compared with his return for the hospitality bountifully afforded him by Lord Melcombe, at his villa, at Hammersmith. Foote there studied the peculiarities of his good-natured host, and then produced him on the stage, in the character of the Patron!

Foote, again, read old pieces, with a purpose, quite as attentively as he did new. When he produced his "Liar," in 1762, he professed to have taken it from Lopez de Vega, that is, from the original source from which Corneille took his "Menteur." From the latter, Steele took his "Lying Lover," and a comparison of the language of the two pieces will show that Foote plundered Steele, and hoped to escape by acknowledging obligations to an older author, whom he could not read. There is least of plagiarism in the "Mayor of Garratt," yet even there Foote is detected in borrowing from "Epsom Wells," but with judgment. If he was a picker-up of un-

connected trifles, he chose only those of value, and he polished and reset them with tact and taste. He has done this in the "Commissary," in which there is a theft from "Injured Love," in a joke which Hook stole, in his turn, from the "Commissary," to enliven his "Killing no Murder."

Except in ceasing to mimic Whitfield on the stage, after the death of that religious reformer, I can scarcely find a trait of delicacy in Foote's character. He seems to have been as unscrupulous in act, as he was cruel in his wit. One may forgive him, however, for his remark to John Rich, who had been addressing him curtly, as "*Mister*." Perceiving that Foote was vexed, Rich apologised, by saying, "I sometimes forget my own name." "I am astonished you could forget your own name," said Foote, "though I know very well that you are not able to write it!"

Foote, who spared nobody, was angry with Dr. Johnson for saying that he was an infidel, as a dog was an infidel; he had never thought of the matter. "*I*, who have added sixteen new characters to the drama of my country!" said Foote. When he left hospitable General Smith's house, after a longer sojourn than usual, Foote's only comment was: "I can't miss his likeness now, after such a good sitting." When Digges first appeared in Cato, we are told that Foote occupied a place in the pit, and raising his voice above the sound of the welcome given to the new actor, exclaimed, "He looks like a Roman chimney-sweeper on May-day." That Foote "deserved to be kicked out of the house for his cruelty," is a

suggestion of Peake's, in which all men will concur. But did he deserve it? Chronology tends to disprove this story. Foote played for the last time on the 30th of July 1777. His name does not appear in the bills after that day. Digges made his first appearance in London, as Cato, on the 14th of the following August, and if Foote went into the pit on that occasion, his envy and malevolence must have supplied him with the energy of which he had been deprived by paralysis and other infirmities.

Foote's vanity was as great as his cruelty. To indulging in the former he owed the loss of his leg. Being on a visit to Lord Mexborough, where the Duke of York and other noble guests were present, Foote foolishly boasted of his horsemanship; being invited to join the hunt the next day, he was ashamed to refuse, and at the very first burst the boaster was thrown, and his leg broken in two places. Even when his leg was amputated, he was helped, by the incident, to an unworthy thought, namely, that he would now be able to mimic the one-legged George Faulkner, of Dublin, to the life! This, however, may have been said out of courage.

He bore, with fortitude, a visitation which gained for him a licence to open the Haymarket, from the 15th of May to the 15th of September. It opened his way to fortune; and though what O'Keefe says may be true, that it was pitiable to see him leaning against the wall of his stage dressing-room, while his servant dressed his cork leg, to suit the character in which his master was to appear, I can well believe

what O'Keefe adds, that "he looked sorrowful, but instantly resuming all his high comic humour and mirth, he hobbled forward, entered the scene, and gave the audience what they expected, their plenty of laugh and delight."

Among the fairest of Foote's sayings was the reply to Mr. Howard's intimation that he was about to publish a second edition of his *Thoughts and Maxims.* "Ay! second thoughts are best." Fair, too, was his retort on the person who alluded to his "game leg." "Make no allusion to my weakest part! Did I ever attack your head?" Then Garrick once took as a compliment, that his bust had been placed by Foote in the private room of the latter. "You are not afraid, I see, to trust me near your gold and banknotes." "No," retorted the humorist, "you have no hands!"

Foote was sometimes beaten with his own weapons. After he had leased the Edinburgh Theatre from Ross, for three years, at five hundred guineas a year, a dispute arose, followed by a lawsuit, in which Foote was defeated. The Scottish agent for the vanquishing side, called on Foote, in London, with his bill of costs, which the actor had to defray. The *amari aliquid* having been got through, the player remarked that he supposed the agent was about to return to Edinburgh, like most of his countrymen, in the cheapest form possible. "Ay, ay," replied the agent, drily, tapping the pocket in which he had put the cash, "I shall travel—*on foot!*" Foote himself is described as looking rueful at the joke. Again, Churchill only

said of him that he was in self-conceit an actor, and straightway Foote, who lived by degrading others, was "outrageously offended." Foote wrote a prose lampoon on Churchill and Lloyd, but did not publish it. Churchill, the bruiser, was not a safe man for Foote to attack, and the actor was fain to be satisfied with calling him the "clumsy curate of Clapham."

Foote took Wilkinson to Dublin in 1757, where they appeared as instructor and pupil, in one of Foote's entertainments, called a "Tea." Wilkinson imitated Luke Sparks as Old Capulet; convulsed the house, instead of being "stoned," as Mrs. Woffington expected, with his imitation of the two Dublin favourites, Margaret herself and Barry, in "Macbeth," and, emboldened by the applause, he imitated Foote in his own presence. Foote's audacity was tripped up by the suddenness of the action; and he looked foolish,—wishing to appear pleased with the audience, but not knowing how to play that difficult part. Subsequently, however, Foote called on Wilkinson, and threatened him with the duel, or chastisement, if he ever dared take further liberties with him on the stage. Wilkinson laughed at the impotently-angry ruffian, and all his brother actors laughed with him. The malignity of Foote found satisfaction in his writing the part of Shift, in the "Minor" (as it was first represented, in Dublin), as a satire on Wilkinson; and he knowingly misrepresented Wilkinson's origin, in order to bring him into contempt.

There is no doubt that Foote loved some of those he jested at. He heard of Sir Francis Delaval's death,

with tears; but he smiled through them, when he was told that the surgeons intended to examine the baronet's head. He remarked that it was useless; he had known the head for nearly a quarter of a century, and had never been able to find anything in it! But the wit's testimony to character is never to be taken without reserve. "Why does he come among us," he said of Lord Loughborough. "He is not only dull himself but the cause of dulness in others!" This is certainly not true, for this Scottish lawyer was remarkable in society for his hilarity, critical powers, and his store of epigrams and anecdotes. Lord Loughborough, moreover, merited the respect of Foote, as an old champion of the stage. When he was Mr. Wedderburn, and represented Dunfermline, in the General Assembly of Scotland, he resisted the motion for an act to prohibit the presence of either lay or clerical members of the Church, at dramatic representations. The Assembly had just before been shaken by the fact that the clergy had been to witness Home's "Douglas," and it had smiled grimly at the palliative plea of one offender, "that he had ensconced himself in a corner, and had hid his face in a handkerchief to *avoid scandal!*" Wedderburn opposed the motion in one of the best speeches which he ever delivered in Scotland, and which ended with these words: "Be contented with the laws which your wise and pious ancestors have handed down to you for the conservation of discipline and morals. Already have you driven from your body its brightest ornament, who might have continued to inculcate the precepts of the Gospel from the pulpit,

as well as embodying them in character and action. Is it, indeed, forbidden to show us the kingdom of heaven by a parable? In all the sermons produced by the united genius of the Church of Scotland, I challenge you to produce anything more pure in morality, or more touching in eloquence, than the exclamation of Lady Randolph:—

> "'Sincerity!
> Thou first of virtues, let no mortal leave
> Thy onward path, although the earth should gape,
> And from the gulf of hell, destruction cry
> To take dissimulation's winding way.'"

Johnson rightly *pooh-poohed* this passage. Foote was admirable in impromptu. When he once saw a sweep on a blood-horse, he remarked: "There goes Warburton on Shakspeare!" When he heard that the Rockingham cabinet was fatigued to death and at its wit's end, he exclaimed, that it could not have been the length of the journey which had tired it! Again, when Lord Caermarthen, at a party, told him his handkerchief was hanging from his pocket, Foote replaced it, with a "Thank you, my lord; you know the company better than I." How much better does Foote appear thus, than when we find him coarsely joking on Lord Kelly's nose, while that lord was hospitably entertaining him, or sneering at Garrick for showing respect to Shakspeare, by a "jubilee."

After all, the enemies he had provoked killed him. His fire and his physical powers were decaying when some of those enemies combined to accuse him of an enormous crime.[1] He did not fly, like guilty Isaac

[1] Jackson who, as "Curtius," threatened Garrick.—*Doran MS.*

Bickerstaffe, under similar circumstances, but manfully met the charge, and proved his innocence. The anxiety, however, finished him. He had an attack of paralysis, played for the last time on the 30th of July 1777, in his "Maid of Bath," and after shifting restlessly from place to place, died on the 21st of October, at Dover. A few months previously, he had made over the Haymarket Theatre to Colman, for a life annuity of £1600, of which Foote lived but to receive one half-year's dividend. At the age of fifty-six, he thus passed away—an emaciated old man—and on Monday, the 27th of October, he was carried, by torchlight, to the cloisters of Westminster Abbey, whither Betterton, Barry, Mrs. Cibber, and others of the brotherhood of players, had been carried before him.

The Haymarket season of that year indicated a new era, for in 1777, Edwin, as Hardcastle,[1] Miss Farren, as Miss Hardcastle; Henderson, as Shylock, and Digges, in Cato, made their first appearance in London. The old Garrick period—save in some noble relics (Macklin, the noblest of them all)—was clearly passing away.

What the dramatic poets produced from the period of Garrick's withdrawal to the end of the century will be best seen by a reference to the Supplement, which I append to this volume.

[1] Edwin made his first appearance in London in 1776, as Flaw, in "The Cozeners."

SUPPLEMENT TO CHAPTER XXII.

List of the principal Dramatic Pieces produced at the Patent Theatres, from the Retirement of Garrick to the End of the Eighteenth Century:—

1776-77.—*Drury Lane.*

"Trip to Scarborough" (altered by Sheridan from Vanbrugh). Miss Hoyden, Mrs. Abington.

"School for Scandal" (Sheridan). Sir Peter Teazle, King; Charles Surface, Smith; Lady Teazle, Mrs. Abington,

1776-77.—*Covent Garden.*

"Caractacus" (Mason). Caractacus, Clarke; Evelina, Mrs. Hartley.

"Know Your Own Mind" (Murphy). Millamour, Lewis; Lady Bell, Mrs. Mattocks.

1777-78.—*Drury Lane.*

"Battle of Hastings" (Cumberland). Edgar Atheling, Henderson; Edwina, Mrs. Yates.

1777-78.—*Covent Garden.*

"Percy" (Hannah More). Percy, Lewis; Douglas, Wroughton; Edwina, Mrs. Barry.

"Alfred" (Home). Alfred, Lewis; Ethelswida, Mrs. Barry.

"Poor Vulcan" (Dibdin). Vulcan, Quick; Venus, Miss Brown.

1778-79.—*Drury Lane.*

"Camp" (Tickell, falsely attributed to Sheridan).

"Fathers, or the Good-natured Man" (newly-discovered Comedy, by Fielding). Sir George Boncour, King.

"Law of Lombardy" (Jephson). Paladore, Smith; Bireno, Henderson; Princess, Miss Young.

"Who's the Dupe" (Mrs. Cowley). Gradus, King; Doyley, Parsons; Elizabeth, Mrs. Brereton.

1778-79.—*Covent Garden.*

"Buthred" (Anon.). Buthred, Wroughton; Rena, Mrs. Hartley.

"Touchstone, or Harlequin Traveller" (a speaking Pantomime). Harlequin, Lee Lewes.

"Calypso" (Masque, by Cumberland). Telemachus, Mrs. Kennedy; Calypso, Miss Brown.

"Fatal Falsehood" (Hannah More). Rivers, Lewis; Julia, Mrs. Hartley.

1779-80.—*Drury Lane.*

"Critic" (Sheridan). Sir Fretful, Parsons; Puff, King; Tilburina, Miss Pope.

"Times" (Mrs. Griffith). Lady Mary Woodley, Mrs. Abington.

"Zoraida" (Hodson). Zoraida, Mrs. Yates.

1779-80.—*Covent Garden.*

"Mirror, or Harlequin Everywhere" (Burletta-Pantomime, by Dibdin). Harlequin, Bates.

"Widow of Delphi" (Cumberland).

"Deaf Lover" (Pilon). Meadows, Lee Lewes.

"Belle's Stratagem" (Mrs. Cowley). Doricourt, Lewis; Laetitia Hardy, Miss Younge.

1780-81.—*Drury Lane.*

"Generous Impostor" (O'Beirne, afterwards Bishop of Meath). Sir Harry Glenville, Palmer; Mrs. Courtly, Mrs. Baddeley.

"Lord of the Manor" (Burgoyne). Trumore, Vernon; Moll Flagon, Suett.

"Royal Suppliants" (Dr. Delap). Acamas, Smith; Dejanira, Mrs. Crawford.

"Dissipation" (Andrews). Lord Rentless, Palmer; Lady Rentless, Mrs. Abington.

1780-81.—*Covent Garden.*

"Tom Thumb" (Fielding's piece turned into an opera, by O'Hara). Tom, Edwin; Arthur, Quick; Dolalolla, Miss Catley.

"Siege of Sinope" (Mrs. Brooke). Pharnaces, Henderson; Thamyris, Mrs. Yates.

"Man of the World" (Macklin). Sir Pertinax, Macklin; Egerton, Lewis; Lady Rodolpha Lumbercourt, Miss Younge.

1781-82.—*Drury Lane.*

"Fair Circassian" (Pratt,—Courtney Melmoth). Omar, Bensley; Hamet, Smith; Fair Circassian, Miss Farren.

1781-82.—*Covent Garden.*

"Duplicity" (Holcroft). Sir Harry Portland, Lewis; Melissa, Mrs. Inchbald.

"Count of Narbonne" (Jephson). Count, Wroughton; Countess, Miss Younge.

"Which is the Man" (Mrs. Cowley). Lord Sparkle, Lee Lewes; Fitzherbert, Henderson; Lady Bell Bloomer, Miss Younge.

"Walloons" (Cumberland). Father Sullivan, Henderson.

1782-83.—*Drury Lane.*

"Fatal Interview" (Hull). Montague, Smith; Mrs. Montague, Mrs. Siddons.

"School for Vanity" (Pratt). Onslow, Brereton; Ophelia Wyndham, Miss Farren.

1782–83.—*Covent Garden.*

"Castle of Andalusia" (O'Keefe). Spado, Quick; Lorenza, Signora Sestini.

"Philodamus" (T. Bentley). Philodamus, Henderson.

"Rosina" (Mrs. Brooke). Belville, Bannister; Rosina, Miss Harper.

"Mysterious Husband" (Cumberland). Lord Davenant, Henderson; Sir Edmund, Yates; Lady Davenant, Miss Younge.

"Bold Stroke for a Husband" (Mrs. Cowley). Julio, Lewis; Olivia, Mrs. Mattocks.

1783–84.—*Drury Lane.*

"Reparation" (Andrews). Lord Hectic, Dodd; Lady Betty Wormwood, Miss Pope.

"Lord Russell" (Rev. Dr. Stratford).

1783–84.—*Covent Garden.*

"Poor Soldier" (O'Keefe). Patrick, Mrs. Kennedy; Dermot, Johnstone; Bagatelle, Wewitzer; Norah, Mrs. Bannister.

"More Ways than One" (Mrs. Cowley). Bellair, Lewis; Arabella, Mrs. Stephen Kemble.

"Robin Hood" (Mac Nally). Robin, Bannister; Clorinda, Mrs. Martyr.

1784–85.—*Drury Lane.*

"The Carmelite" (Cumberland). Montgomerie, Kemble; St. Valori, Smith; Matilda, Mrs. Siddons.

"Natural Son" (Cumberland). Blushenly, Palmer; Lady Paragon, Miss Farren.

1784–85.—*Covent Garden.*

"Fontainebleau; or, Our Way in France" (O'Keefe). Lackland, Lewis.

"Follies of a Day" (Holcroft, from Beaumarchais). Figaro, Holcroft; Almaviva, Lewis; Susanna, Miss Younge.

1785–86.—*Drury Lane.*

"Heiress" (Burgoyne). Sir Clement Flint, King; Alscrip, Parsons; Lady Emily Gayville, Miss Farren.

"Captives" (Dr. Delap). Everallin, Kemble; Malvina, Mrs. Siddons.

1785–86.—*Covent Garden.*

"Omai." Grand spectacle, by O'Keefe.

1786–87.—*Drury Lane.*

"Richard Cœur de Lion" (Burgoyne). Richard, Kemble; Antonio, Miss Romanzini; Matilda, Mrs. Jordan; Laurette, Mrs. Crouch.

"School for Greybeards" (Mrs. Cowley). Alexis and Gaspar (the Greybeards), King and Parsons; Seraphina, Miss Farren.

"Seduction" (Holcroft). Lord and Lady Morden, Kemble and Mrs. Siddons.[1]

"Julia" (Jephson). Mentevole, Kemble; Julia, Mrs. Siddons.

1786–87.—*Covent Garden.*

"Richard Cœur de Lion" (Mac Nally). Blondel, Johnstone; Queen Berengaria, Mrs. Billington.

"He Would be a Soldier" (Pilon). Caleb, Edwin; Charlotte, Mrs. Pope.

"Eloisa" (Reynolds). St. Preux, Pope; Eloisa, Miss Brunton.

"Such Things Are" (Mrs. Inchbald). Elvirus, Holman; Lady Tremor, Mrs. Mattocks.

1787–88.—*Drury Lane.*

"New Peerage; or, Our Eyes may Deceive Us" (Harriet Lee). Lady Charlotte Courtly, Miss Farren.

"Fate of Sparta" (Mrs. Cowley). Cleombrotus, Kemble; Chelonice, Mrs. Siddons.

"Love in the East" (Cobb). Warnford, Kelly; Ormellina, Mrs. Crouch.

"The Regent" (B. Greatheed). Manuel, Kemble; Dianora, Mrs. Siddons.

1787–88.—*Covent Garden.*

"The Farmer" (O'Keefe). Jemmy Jumps, Edwin; Molly Maybush, Mrs. Martyr.

"Ton; or, the Follies of Fashion" (Lady Wallace). Lord Bonton, Wewitzer; Lady Bonton, Mrs. Mattocks.

"Animal Magnetism" (Mrs. Inchbald). Doctor, Quick; Constance, Mrs. Wells.

1788–89.—*Drury Lane.*

"Impostors" (Cumberland). Lord Janus, Palmer; Eleanor, Mrs. Jordan.

"Mary, Queen of Scots" (Hon. John St. John). Norfolk, Kemble; Queen Mary, Mrs. Siddons; Queen Elizabeth, Mrs. Ward.

"False Appearances" (General Conway). Marquis, Kemble; Cælia, Mrs. Kemble.

1788–89.—*Covent Garden.*

"Highland Reel" (O'Keefe). Shelty, Edwin; Moggy, Miss Fontenelle.

"Child of Nature" (Mrs. Inchbald). Almanza, Farren; Amanthis, Miss Brunton.

"The Toy, or Hampton Court Frolics" (O'Keefe). Alibi, Quick; Lady Jane, Miss Brunton.

"Dramatist" (Reynolds). Vapid, Lewis; Ennui, Edwin; Willoughby, Macready; Louisa Courtney, Miss Brunton.

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[1] Should be Miss Farren.

1789-90.—*Drury Lane.*

"Marcella" (Hayley). Hernandez, Kemble; Marcella, Mrs. Powell.

"Haunted Tower" (Cobb). Lord William, Kelly; Lewis, Suett; Lady Elinor, Mrs. Crouch.

"Love in Many Masks" (Kemble, from Aphra Behn). Willmore, Kemble; Valeria, Mrs. Kemble; Helena, Mrs. Jordan.

1789-90.—*Covent Garden.*

"Marcella" (Hayley). Hernandez, Harley; Marcella, Mrs. Pope.

"Eudora" (Hayley). Raymond, Holman; Eudora, Mrs. Pope.

"Widow of Malabar" (Marianna Starke). Indamora, Miss Brunton.

1790-91.—*Drury Lane.*

"Better Late than Never" (Reynolds and Andrews). Saville, Kemble; Flurry, Dodd; Augusta, Mrs. Jordan.

"Siege of Belgrade" (Cobb). Seraskier, Kelly; Peter, Dignum; Katharine, Mrs. Crouch.

1790-91.—*Covent Garden.*

"School for Arrogance" (Holcroft). Sheepy, Munden; Lady Peckham, Mrs. Mattocks.

"Two Strings to Your Bow" (Jephson). Lazarillo, Munden; Ferdinand, Macready; Clara, Mrs. Harlowe.

"Woodman" (the Rev. Bate Dudley). Wilford, Incledon.

"Modern Antiques" (O'Keefe). Cockletop, Quick; Frank, Munden.

"Lorenzo" (Merry). Lorenzo, Holman; Zoriana, Miss Brunton (afterwards Mrs. Merry).

"Wild Oats" (O'Keefe). Rover, Lewis; Ephraim Smooth, Munden; Lady Amaranth, Mrs. Pope.

1791-92.—*Drury Lane Company at the King's Theatre, Haymarket.*

"Huniades" (Hannah Brand). Huniades, Kemble; Agmunda, by the authoress, her first appearance on any stage.

"Fugitive" (Richardson). Young Manly, Palmer; Lord Dartford, Dodd; Mrs. Larron, Miss Pope.

"Dido" (Hoare). Æneas, Mrs. Crouch; Dido, Madame Mara.

1791-92.—*Covent Garden.*

"Notoriety" (Reynolds). Nominal, Lewis; Sophia, Mrs. Wells.

"Road to Ruin" (Holcroft). Goldfinch, Lewis; Old Dornton, Munden; Sophia, Mrs. Merry.

"Irishman in London" (Macready). Murtoch Delaney, Johnstone; Colloony, Macready; Cubba, Mrs. Fawcett.

1792-93.—*Drury Lane at Haymarket Opera; except on Tuesdays and Saturdays, then at the Haymarket Theatre.*

"The Prize" (Hoare). Lenitive, Bannister, jun.; Caroline, Signora Storace.

"Rival Sisters" (Murphy). Theseus, Palmer; Ariadne and Phædra, Mrs. Siddons and Mrs. Powell.

"False Colours" (Morris). Sir Paul Panick, King.

1792-93.—*Covent Garden.*

"Columbus" (Morton). Columbus, Pope; Cora, Mrs. Pope.

"Every One has his Fault" (Inchbald). Harmony, Munden; Lady E. Irwin, Mrs. Pope.

"Sprigs of Laurel" (O'Keefe). Nipperkin, Munden.

1793-94.—*Drury Lane, under Colman, at the Haymarket.*

"Mountaineers" (Colman). Octavian, Kemble; Floranthe, Mrs. Goodall (was first acted in the summer of 1793, before the company went to Drury Lane in September).[1]

"Children in the Wood" (Morton). Walter, Bannister, jun.

"Lodoiska" (Kemble). Lovinski, Palmer; Lodoiska, Mrs. Crouch.

1794.—*Drury Lane; in the new House built by Holland.*

"The Jew" (Cumberland). Sheva, Bannister, jun.; Eliza Ratcliffe, Miss Farren.

1793-94.—*Covent Garden.*

"Siege of Berwick" (Jerningham). Seaton, Pope; Ethelberta, Mrs. Pope.

"Love's Frailties" (Holcroft). Sir Gregory Oldwort, Quick.

"Travellers in Switzerland" (Bate Dudley). Dorimond, Johnstone; Sir Leinster M'Laughlin, Rock.

"Siege of Meaux" (Pye). St. Pol, Pope; Matilda, Mrs. Pope.[2]

1794-95.—*Drury Lane.*

"Emilia Galotti" (from Lessing, by Thompson).[3] Appiani, C. Kemble; Orsina, Mrs. Siddons.

"Wedding Day" (Mrs. Inchbald). Young Contest, C. Kemble; Sir Adam, King; Lady Contest, Mrs. Jordan.

"Wheel of Fortune" (Cumberland). Penruddock, Kemble; Henry Woodville, C. Kemble; Emily Tempest, Miss Farren.

"Adopted Child" (Birch). Michael, Bannister, jun.; Nell, Mrs. Bland.

"First Love" (Cumberland). Billy Bustler, Suett; Sabina Rosny, Mrs. Jordan.

1794-95.—*Covent Garden.*

"The Rage" (Reynolds). Darnley, Holman; Clara, Mrs. Mountain.

"Town before You" (Mrs. Cowley). Tippy, Lewis; Fancourt, Fawcett; Mrs. Fancourt, Mrs. Mattocks.

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[1] There is a slight confusion here. The company opened at the Haymarket in September. They did not go to Drury Lane till April.

[2] Boaden's "Fontainville Forest" might be added.

[3] I do not think this was Thompson's translation.

"Mysteries of the Castle" (Andrews and Reynolds). Hilario, Lewis.
"England Preserved" (Watson). Surrey, Holman.
"Life's Vagaries" (O'Keefe). George Burgess, Fawcett; L'Œillet, Farley; Augusta Woodbine, Miss Wallis.
"Deserted Daughter" (Holcroft). Mordent, Pope; Item, Quick; Joanna Mordent, Miss Wallis.
"Secret Tribunal" (Boaden). Herman, Holman; Ida, Miss Wallis.

1795-96.—*Drury Lane.*

"Man of Ten Thousand" (Holcroft). Dorington, Kemble; Olivia, Miss Farren.
"Iron Chest" (Colman). Sir Edward Mortimer, Kemble; Judith, Miss De Camp.
"Almeyda" (Miss Lee). Alonzo, Kemble; Almeyda, Mrs. Siddons.
"Mahmoud" (Hoare). Mahmoud, Kemble.
"Vortigern" (Ireland, but acted as Shakspeare's). Vortigern, Kemble; Constantius, Bensley; Fool, King; Edmunda, Mrs. Powell; Flavia, Mrs. Jordan.

1795-96.—*Covent Garden.*

"Speculation" (Reynolds). Tanjore, Lewis; Lady Katharine Project, Mrs Davenport.
"Days of Yore" (Morton).[1] Voltimar, Pope; Adela, Mrs. Pope.
"Lock and Key" (Hoare). Brummagem, Munden; Fanny, Mrs. Martyr.

1796-97.—*Drury Lane.*

"Conspiracy" (Jephson). Sextus, Kemble; Vitellia, Mrs. Siddons.
"The Will" (Reynolds). Veritas, R. Palmer; Albina Mandeville, Mrs. Jordan.

1796-97.—*Covent Garden.*

"Abroad and at Home" (Holman). Harcourt, Incledon.
"Cure for the Heart Ache" (Morton). Young Rapid, Lewis; Bronze, Farley; Ellen Vortex, Mrs. Pope.
"Wives as they Were and Maids as they Are" (Inchbald). Bronzely, Lewis; Miss Dorillon, Miss Wallis.[2]

1797-98.—*Drury Lane.*

"Cheap Living" (Reynolds). Sponge, John Bannister.
"Castle Spectre" (Lewis). Osmond, Barrymore; Percy, Kemble.
"Blue Beard" (Colman). Abomelique, Palmer; Fatima, Mrs. Crouch.
"Knave or Not" (Holcroft). Monrose, Palmer; Susan, Mrs. Jordan.
"Stranger" (Kotzebue).[3] Stranger, Kemble; Mrs. Haller, Mrs. Siddons.

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[1] Should be Cumberland.
[2] Reynold's "Fortune's Fool" might be added.
[3] Translated by Thompson.

1797-98.—*Covent Garden.*

"False Impressions" (Cumberland). Scud, Quick.

"Secrets worth Knowing" (Morton). Undermine, Munden.

"He's much to Blame" (Holcroft).[1] Versatile, Lewis; Lady Jane, Miss Betterton (afterwards Mrs. Glover).

"Curiosity" (by the late King of Sweden).

"Blue Devils" (Colman the Younger). Megrim, Fawcett.

1798-99.—*Drury Lane.*

"Aurelio and Miranda" (Boaden). Aurelio, Kemble; Miranda, Mrs. Siddons.

"Secret" (Morris). Lizard, jun., John Bannister; Rosa, Mrs. Jordan.

"East Indian" (Lewis). Mortimer, Kemble; Zorayda, his daughter, Mrs. Jordan.

"Castle of Montval" (Whalley). Old Count, Kemble; Matilda, Mrs. Powell.

"First Faults" (Miss De Camp). Fallible, C. Kemble; Tulip, Miss Mellon.

"Pizarro" (Sheridan). Rolla, Kemble; Alonzo, C. Kemble; Cora, Mrs. Jordan; Elvira, Mrs. Siddons.

1798-99.—*Covent Garden.*

"Lovers' Vows" (Inchbald). Frederick, Pope; Amelia, Mrs. H. Johnston.

"Ramah Droog" (Cobb). Sidney, Incledon.

"Jew and the Doctor" (T. Dibdin). Abednego, Fawcett.

"Laugh When You Can" (Reynolds). Gossamer, Lewis.

"Votary of Wealth" (Holman). Leonard, Pope; Julia, Mrs. Pope.

"Five Thousand a Year" (T. Dibdin). Fervid, Lewis; Maria, Miss Betterton.

"Birthday" (T. Dibdin). Captain Bertram, Munden.

"Fortune's Frolic" (Allingham). Robin Roughead, Fawcett.

1799-1800.—*Drury Lane.*

"Adelaide" (Pye). Richard, Kemble; Adelaide, Mrs. Siddons.

"Of Age To-Morrow" (T. Dibdin). Frederick, John Bannister.

"De Montfort" (Joanna Baillie). De Montfort, Kemble; Jane, Mrs. Siddons.

"Indiscretion" (Hoare). Maxim, King; Julia, Mrs. Jordan.

"Antonio" (Godwin). Antonio, Kemble; Helena, Mrs. Siddons.

1799-1800.—*Covent Garden.*

"Management" (Reynolds). Mist, Fawcett; Mrs. Dazzle, Mrs. Davenport.

"Turnpike Gate" (Knight). Crack, Munden.

"Joanna" (Cumberland, from Kotzebue). Joanna, Mrs. Pope.

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[1] Genest says "attributed to Holcroft, but really written by Fenwick."

"Speed the Plough" (Morton). Bob Handy, Fawcett.
"Paul and Virginia" (Cobb;—music by Mazzinghi). Paul, Incledon; Virginia, Mrs. H. Johnston.[1]

In the next chapter, we will examine something of the progress of the stage, as indicated by the above records.

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[1] Mrs. Inchbald's "Wise Man of the East" might be added.

Mrs. Yates as Mandane.

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PRINTED BY BALLANTYNE, HANSON AND CO.
EDINBURGH AND LONDON.

Wm. A. Nettleton
Jan. 1896

3 1197 00509 0367